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THE QUEST FOR FORTUNE.

A Tale of the Younger World.

By HENRY SEDLEY.

. . . . I met a fool i' the forest,
A motley fool; a miserable world!
As I do live by food I met a fool;
Who laid him down and bask'd him in the sun,
And rail'd on Lady Fortune in good terms;
In good set terms, and yet a motley fool.
"Good morrow, fool," quoth I!" "No, sir," quoth he,
"Call me not fool till heaven hath sent me fortune."
. . . . . .
And thereby hangs a tale.

NEW YORK:
SHELDON & COMPANY.
1865.

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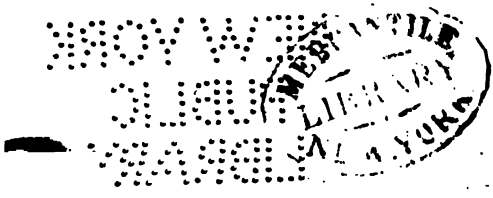

MARIAN ROOKE:

OR,

THE QUEST FOR FORTUNE.

Book the First.

CHAPTER I.

Far beyond the tossing Atlantic,—far beyond that chain of blue mountains which early settlers once thought the ultima thule of white encroachment,—far beyond the turbid stream whose vast dimensions make sea-coasts of its shores, and bear the spoils of a continent to the Gulf,—aye, and even far beyond that stern range of once impassable Rocky Mountains, the ever-restless Anglo-Saxon has pushed his way, until there is scarcely a streamlet he has left unexplored, scarcely a square mile he has left untrodden. To speak of change in connection with America seems idle now, for the words have become all but synonymous. And yet these mutations, so far as they are connected with the occupation of fresh territory, must, through physical necessity, come to an end; the swifter the racer the sooner he comes to his goal, and the rapidity of a nation's growth bespeaks an early maturity, if not a premature decay. There are those who may find abundant significance in the fact that all of the many vast tracts belonging to the United States which had undergone territorial organization, became permanently settled during the present decade. There were no more lands,—none at least in the direction of the setting sun,—to wrest from the unwilling savage, no more to conquer from the weaker neighbor; the exciting progress had come to an end at last, for the extraordinary people, who for an eventful century had been struggling, fight-

ing, and floating their way westward. There was nothing further to be accomplished by those who had moved their national boundary from the Alleghanies to the Pacific.

Fifteen years ago it was not so. There were then far reaching spaces, where the elk and the antelope could feed in peace, and the bison still roam undisturbed. Spaces where no human beings save bands of the thin and scattered tribes of Sioux, Pawnees, and Apaches ever found their way to break with rude chase or ruder battle the solitude of nature. Spaces where we may suppose that for ages and ages back no sounds save those of nature's own everlasting processes had interrupted the solemn stillness. And these tracts might to-day have been equally vacant and silent,—might have been yet unoccupied, or, as some would have it, yet unpolluted by the white man, but for one thing, which since 1492 has been working such wondrous effects upon mankind and their habitation,—the potent agent of *discovery*.

The same irresistible lure which wrought the fall of Montezuma and the Incas,—the sad possession which plunged Mexico and Peru into a sea of troubles, whence they have never altogether emerged,—has prematurely developed and populated these occidental wilds which, by a natural process, and making all allowance for a prodigious immigration, would otherwise have remained virgin for another half century.

When the news reached the Atlantic States, in 1849, of Captain Sutter's discovery, with the subsequent report that portions of the soil of California were literally spangled with gold, a rush ensued for the favored region, such as scarcely ever has occurred in history. Some crowded on board steamships bound for the Isthmus of Darien, with intention to cross to Panama, and again take ship to San Francisco. Some, with more patience or fewer dollars, contented themselves with sailing ships going by the circuitous passage of the Horn. Some, and these latter included many a bold frontiersman, with plenty of pluck, but oftentimes no money at all, unable or unwilling to buy transport by sea, betook themselves to the more hazardous and more adventurous resource of crossing the plains.

It is true that nearly fifty years before such an exploit had been attempted and performed. Americans, familiar with the annals of Congress, and few of them are not, knew that in 1803, "Captain Meriwether Lewis, of the 1st Regiment of Infantry, was appointed, with a party of men, to explore the *river Missouri*, from its mouth to its source, and crossing the *highlands by the* shortest portage, to seek the best water com-

munication thence to the Pacific ocean; and Lieutenant Clark was appointed second in command." But this expedition, as well as others which succeeded it, besides being heavily armed, well disciplined, accompanied by skilful guides and trappers, and under government authority, accomplished, as was intended, most of its journey by water, a method of transit presenting many advantages over those whose sole aim was that of getting as quickly as possible from one point to another. The pilgrims of '49 sought only to get at the Californian gold, and cared little about the navigable facilities of the Missouri and Columbia rivers, or the flora and fauna to be found upon their banks. Thus they attempted short cuts, seeking to make their course coincide as nearly as possible with a parallel of latitude from their point of departure. Sometimes they succeeded, to the benefit of those who come after; but often in such efforts, they paid the last penalty for their enterprise, and perished miserably in sterile waterless expanse or freezing mountain pass; so that not long ago there were tracks, marked by the whitening bones of their first discoverers, which did sad service for later adventurers, who closely followed them as guides; a ghastly remembrancer of the episode in the Babes in the Wood, save that now there were no unthinking or pitying robins to cover or remove the relics of those who had gone before.

Some of these unfortunates had perished of hunger and thirst; for although in those days there was no lack of game in certain places, yet in the heart of the continent there are long stretches of country divided by no water-courses, and where, if agriculture ever flourishes hereafter, it must be with the aid of extensive irrigation. In the dry season these stretches are utterly destitute of water, and therefore as empty of fur or feather as Sahara itself. Into these inhospitable tracts, sometimes by miscalculation of their position, sometimes to avoid hostile Indians, wayfarers would stray and wander about until exhaustion forced them to lie down and die. There were also many cases where trains would be attacked and captured by the savages, whose numbers, now yearly decreasing, were then formidable, and who, possessing great numbers of fleet horses, were often able to gather in such force as to overcome resistance however brave, and almost invariably butchered whoever might have survived the fight.

All these dangers had been evaded by a little caravan, which, on a bright afternoon in June, 1850, was slowly descending the last slopes which lead down from the Rocky Mountains on the further side of the South-*west* Pass. There were four large wagons, *or ox-carts of the sort* used in the western country,

with huge wheels, and tall canvas tops. Each of these vehicles was drawn by oxen, which, albeit they showed signs of a heavy journey, were yet in tolerable condition. The third in the line was somewhat the larger of the four, and, in truth, its tent-like cover sheltered what constituted an apartment of very fair proportions, and which, as we shall see, was capable of affording no little comfort to its occupants. At the head of the column rode a large sinewy man of fifty, who bestrode a powerful mule, and who was constantly scrutinizing—notwithstanding the rays of the sun which were slanting directly athwart his face—the sweep of plains and valleys which lay below. In his immediate rear, and in front of the wagons, walked pensively about a dozen head of cattle, on either side of whom there were a couple of men mounted on horses of the plains; while behind the wagons again rode half-a-dozen more, with rifle on shoulder, forming the end of the train.

For many weeks had the travellers been pressing their way towards the west. They had traversed monotonous plains, seemingly interminable, whose arid surfaces bore scarcely any vegetation but bushes of wild sage and the more obnoxious prickly pear. They had crossed innumerable water-courses, fringed with the cottonwood and the willow, sometimes by fording, sometimes by rafting, sometimes by horse-ferry constructed of their own resources. They had climbed many a steep hill, each like the other, with unvarying crests of cedar, pine, and wild mahogany. They had camped in many a little timber "island," whose welcome shelter and security in the otherwise unbroken plain invited their weary feet to tarry for the night. But, although they had experienced vicissitudes, had lost some of their cattle, had encountered many Indians, and had more than once been short of water, the little band had been spared graver disaster, and had lost none of their number by violence or disease. Their immunity was, no doubt, partly due to good fortune; but their numbers and somewhat formidable appearance had likewise been serviceable, for they were a powerful-looking body of men, and mustered over a dozen rifles. Moreover, the consequences of some of their recent acts of murder and plunder had begotten among the tribes of the plains a wholesome dread of their "Great Father" at Washington, and uncomfortable doubts as to the length of his arm. The passes of the great mountain range had become, under these circumstances, the most critical portion of the overland route; the *distance from* the settlements, and the all but impossibility of *tracing out* offenders, combining to multiply their dangers.

No wonder, then, that those who crossed the plains should be delighted when they had left the great central chain of the Rocky Mountains behind them.

The man at the head of the column turned in his saddle as if to escape for a moment the glare of the falling sun, and gazed at the scene behind him. He gazed upon a countless succession of hills, mere swells at first of red and brown, with clumps here and there of hardy redwood and scrawny mahogany, the foliage touched ever and anon with a glint of gold. Further off, as the panorama receded, the swells sharpened into points and crags crowned with bristling pines, and broken with masses of granite and flint, all bathed in hues of various purple. Furthest yet, but with numberless gradations between, rose the solemn, dark, blue peaks of the central range, crested with snow, which, suffused with the oblique rays of the sun, shot forth all manner of radiant colors. The spectator saw no more of earth beyond, nothing but the pure, delicate blue of the approaching evening; a background, indeed, of the same color as the mountains, and yet so wonderfully in contrast.

The man gazed at the vista for a while, not altogether unconscious of its beauty, and then suddenly gave vent to a cheery shout:

"Hurrah, boys! We've passed the wust of it! We're gittin' out o' the foot-hills, and to-night we'll sleep west o' the mountains!"

A responsive cheer broke from the men nearest the speaker, and those behind, readily guessing its purport, without quite catching the words which inspired it, took up the cry and cheered until the welkin rang again.

As the echoes subsided, a voice far away to the west took up the cry once more, and sent it back in tones which, although distant, were distinct and clear; and directly after this again was heard the ringing bay of a dog.

"That's Luke!" said the pioneer of the column. And "That's Luke!" said the cattle-drivers behind, and the horsemen in the rear of the train. And "That's Luke," was repeated by two or three feminine voices, whilst their owners' heads were thrust forth from the wagon the third in the line.

"I hope he's got some venison," said one on the right. "I'm blamed tired of hung beef and pemmican for more'n a week, and only half a pint o' whiskey a day."

"Pshaw, Jabe Fitch," retorted his companion, a long Kentuckian, with an eye and face like a hawk, "ye think o' nothing but *the inside o' yer stomach*; be thankful ye've got yer

scalp on the outside o' yer head. That's the first lookout, goin' through the mountains."

"A place for everything, and everything in its place, Dick Railes," quoth the other, "as my old grandmother used to tell. When we was goin' through a skeary place, why, I say look out for safety and nothin' else; when we've got out o' the woods, I allow we've got a right to holler!"

"Ay, but maybe we ain't out of 'em yet."

"No? Why, Uncle Seth thinks there's ne'er an Injun 'twixt this and Stockton; that is, once out o' the foot hills."

"Seth Armstrong's cute, he is; but he don't allers know everything. It ain't the call of an Illinise or Ohio farmer to be up to all the ins and outs o' the redskins, like as if he was raised on the frontier."

"You don't s'pose—"

"There may not be an Injun within a hundred mile on us; and then, again, look thar."

The speaker pointed as he spoke, and his interlocutor peered long and earnestly in the direction indicated ere he could make out what the practised eyes of the Kentuckian had detected some time before. Far away on the right, perhaps a couple of miles distant, so tiny as to be nearly invisible, curled upwards a spiral of smoke, blue and delicate against the green and brown of the earth and the foliage. Jabez Fitch looked for some time, and then drew a long breath.

"Thunder! hadn't we better let on to Uncle Seth?"

"No. Leastways not yet. Maybe Luke's lit a fire; though it ain't like him afore night. Maybe that 'ere simpleton's set the brush ablaze for fun. Maybe one o' Luke's wads has done it. Anyhow, we'll be up with him soon, and we can find out."

The sun was now sinking fast—to use the incorrect expression. As the train was continually descending, it was shortening its daylight by a double process, and in a few minutes after the little colloquy described, it had become almost dusky. Still, it was light enough to see a couple of hundred yards further on, a stream which ran directly across their path. It was an old acquaintance, the party having often passed it miles behind as a mountain brook, and having been beholden to its clear current for many a refreshing draught. It was growing more ambitious as it neared the plains, and although it had learned to be less noisy, it was much deeper, and now boasted a width of some twenty yards. On its furthest bank from our travellers stood a little grove of cottonwood trees, gracefully distributed in a curve of *the stream; and beneath* could now be discerned a group con-

sisting of five figures, two of which, however, alone were human.

The most conspicuous form was that of a young man full six feet high, who stood in advance of the others, leaning upon his rifle. He was attired, as were indeed most of the company, in a leathern or buckskin hunting shirt, and he wore Indian leggings and moccasins as the best protection against the prickly pear of the plains.

Luke Armstrong might have seen some five-and-twenty summers, and as he stood bareheaded, with his brown curling locks fluttering in the breeze, and a smile of welcome wreathing his handsome bronzed features, he looked the very ideal of manly strength and good humor.

A few paces behind was another youth, apparently fast asleep. His limbs were stretched carelessly upon the ground, while his head was pillowed on the back of a huge black dog, who lay patiently enough, although his sagacious eyes and a scarcely perceptible movement of his bushy tail showed plainly his interest in the approaching party.

The head of the sleeper was covered with a thick shock of coarse red hair, and the cap which had fallen on his side was decorated with three or four feathers of great length and gaudy colors. His dress was similar to that of Luke, except that it was fantastically ornamented with beads, feathers, and bits of fur, in a manner usually considered more consonant with a barbarian than a civilized taste.

At a short distance a couple of Mexican mustangs, secured by lariats, were nibbling the bright green herbage which carpeted the borders of the stream; and their saddles and bridles cast upon the ground completed the inanimate portion of the picture.

"Well, Luke, lad, what fortune?" cried Seth Armstrong, as his mule paused in splashing passage of the rivulet to bury its nose greedily in its cooling current.

"Why, as to grass and water, father, you see; and as to game, look there!"

He pointed as he spoke to a fine elk, which swung from the lower branch of a neighboring tree, and at whose foot there lay a considerable pile of feathered spoil.

"We might have had two," continued Luke, regretfully. "He would be hunting squirrels and Calumet eagles for the sake of their tails, instead of for good hullsome meat to keep the pot bilin'."

"Darn the *simpleton!" said Dick* Railes, riding up. "He's *allers spilin' sport. If I was you,* Luke, I'd leave him with the

strong proposed to pause for eight-and-forty hours or thereabouts, to give man and beast an opportunity to recruit. For such a purpose few spots could have been discovered more favorable than that on which they now found themselves. There was abundant grazing for the cattle, plenty of water, and, although the site of their camp was heavily timbered, there were few trees and little brush for a long distance on either side to furnish cover for any possible lurking enemies. This last consideration, no less important than the others, determined the question of a more than usually protracted sojourn.

CHAPTER II.

Of the four wagons described as forming the train, one was exclusively devoted to carrying the provisions of the party, and was placed when travelling first in the line. The second was filled with farming tools, extra gear for the teams, and such supply of grain or other forage as could, from time to time, be obtained to make up for incidental scarcity on the march. For there were occasional wastes to traverse whereon the burning sun had shrivelled every blade of grass and absorbed every drop of moisture; places, to cross which in safety, the wayfarer must provide food and water, not only for himself but for his cattle. The last wagon was used for the conveyance of such personal luggage as each of the party was permitted to take, and contained besides various articles of household furniture from the farmhouse of the Armstrongs on the banks of the Ohio. It had been a sore question with poor Mrs. Armstrong, which of these household gods to cherish and which to turn her back upon; which of the old familiar things to keep familiar still, and which to abandon forever. Give her her way, indeed, and she would have brought the old farmhouse itself, carefully packed in sections; ay, and the old red barn, and the hen-house, and the pig-pen, and all the living things which inhabited them. But here Seth Armstrong was inexorable. He was sensible of yielding to a certain weakness in undertaking this hazardous journey at all; and he was, at all events, determined to assert his dignity and recompense his self-respect in the carrying out of details.

The expedition had its origin simply in this wise: Luke Arm-

strong, like many other young men, and quite in a natural way, had taken the "California fever." All reasoning and entreaty to the contrary, go to the land of gold he would. Now, when his mother found his resolution inflexible, she at once resolved to carry out the only device whereby a separation from her first-born might be avoided. She determined on the transportation of the whole family to the Pacific shore; and, as in all her enterprises, when she set to work with a will, she succeeded. Not without difficulty, however, for Seth Armstrong was more strongly attached to his home than many of his countrymen are prone to be. He had left a farm in New England five-and-twenty years before; a farm where his people had dwelt and died for many generations. But the soil was flinty and ungenerous on the banks of the Connecticut, and it was bounteous and virgin on those of the Ohio. It had been a hard struggle for bare subsistence in the former case, and life became easy and comfortable in the latter. So Seth Armstrong had struck down new roots, and had thriven and flourished apace until he was turned of fifty years of age. His family never had much money, perhaps, but they had always abundance to eat, to drink, and to wear. Seth was contented with his lot, and so was his wife, and so was their blue-eyed daughter Kitty, and so, until Captain Sutter's lucky discovery, had been his son Luke. Be that as it might, they were now all of them infected with the gold fever.

Seth, with many sighs, had, as he called it, "pulled up stakes," shipped his goods down the river to St. Louis, made up his party with a great deal of shrewdness and sagacity, and in the middle of the continent, with his Lares and Penates—such as were left of them—here he was. But he had obstinately refused to "tote" any articles excepting such as he could be convinced were absolutely necessary, and hence had arisen many a momentous conflict of opinion between himself and "mother." In these encounters, as has been suggested, Seth came off victorious in a general way; and if exceptions existed in trifling particulars, they were to be found in the third wagon of the train, which we now propose to describe.

Not to be paradoxical, it was a nondescript sort of a vehicle. It had been used on the journey as a residence, serving as kitchen for the entire party, sitting-room for the females, and, divided by a thick canvas partition, as a chamber for the Armstrong family at night; the others either finding room in the remaining wagons, or sleeping, by preference, in the open air. But these were *not the sole uses of the* vehicle in question; for it

had not only been applied to these necessary purposes, but had seen service on the march as a pontoon, and on one occasion, even more simply, as a boat. The truth was that Seth Armstrong, foreseeing a variety of exigencies wherein such a contrivance would be useful, had, with Luke's aid, built this remarkable wagon himself. It was entirely of home manufacture, with the exception perhaps of the springs, which were those of an ordinary heavy van, and from which the body could be readily detached. In the rear was a flight of steps similar to, although somewhat higher than those of a common omnibus, and a window of half-a-dozen squares admitted light over the door. Towards the foremost part of the roof, which was of stout canvas, and upwards of seven feet high from the floor, a small stove-pipe emerged, and conducted smoke from the fire below. The whole structure might have been sixteen feet in length, by seven in width.

While the men were attending to the cattle and preparing their camp-fire to cook their game, for preparations of meat were usually made in the open air, a scene of no less activity was progressing in Castle Armstrong; for such was the name conferred by the travellers on the edifice just described. The brilliant light of the moon and stars sufficed for all practical purposes out of doors, even without the help of the fire. Not so, however, within, where the artificial aid of a pair of candles was necessary to carry out the operations in progress. A fire had been lighted in the stove directly after the halt, and was now blazing briskly enough to set a large kettle of water singing aloud which was suspended over it. A comely, cherry-lipped girl, with sparkling blue eyes, and a striking resemblance to Luke Armstrong, was stirring a mixture intended to make "hoe-cake" on a dresser, which worked with a hinge, in the fore part of the vehicle, while a middle-aged, but not unprepossessing woman, whom it needs no second glance to identify as the mother of the younger one, was getting "spiders" and gridirons, and other indescribable utensils, ready for the evening meal. At the other end of the apartment, and her features somewhat obscured, as the candles stood on a table close by Kitty Armstrong, was the tall figure of another girl, stooping to get something out from one of the drawers which were fitted under each of the berths. Such was the picture presented to Luke Armstrong as, after unyoking and settling the oxen, he clambered up to the seat, and thrust his good-humored face into the wagon.

"*Good evening,* mother!" cried he. "We've got such a

beautiful doe! And the fires are lit, and Bridget and Jabe are cutting the steaks, and the Doctor and Dick Railes are squabbling about the distance to Salt Lake, and father's found an old corral for the critters! I hope you're most ready with the hoecake, for we've all got such famous appetites!"

"All right, Sonny," responded the matron. "We ain't usually much behind the men folks, 'specially at cookin' time. 'Father says we're goin' to rest here a spell."

"Yes, we're through the Great Pass, and a right smart bit on our way. There ain't much more chance of stumblin' agen the redskins, and the cattle need a day or two to pick up."

"I'm so glad," exulted Kitty Armstrong. "I'm sick and tired of this joggle joggle, which makes you feel jest like crossing Lake Michigan. Now, you Luke," she continued, coming up and kissing his brown cheek, "where's my present?"

"Choose."

"No, I won't choose hands, for you always change 'em. Any how, Mary Anne gets the prettiest. Let's see!"

"No, no, honor bright. Look, I won't stir after you pick, 'cept to give it to you."

"Well, then, left."

"Here you are then Kitty, left."

Luke handed his sister a band or circlet of curious shape, but evidently intended for the head. It consisted of some sort of soft skin, adorned with porcupine quills, and enriched at the centre by a noble plume from the eagle, known among the Indians as the Calumet.

"Why, Luke!" cried the girl in surprise, not unmingled with alarm. "Where did you find it?"

"In the mountains this morning. I thought Ike had tomfoolery enough stuck about him, and 'twould better suit you. I think it's a chief's."

"Then there are Indians near us, after all?"

"How d'ye make that out, silly? The loser may be dead or hundreds of miles away."

"I hope he is the last any how. But what have you got for Mary Anne?"

"Nuthin' much," said Luke, a flush warming his frank brow, "only a bunch of little mountain posies. Won't you take 'em, Mary Anne?"

The tall girl came forward at the invitation, and extended her hand. She was dark—not of Luke's sun-bronzed hue, but with a complexion of clear olive, through which the blood could be traced as if *the skin were that of the* purest blonde. Like Kitty,

she wore a plain stuff gown, happily unextended by crinoline; and her head carried only its own ample ornament. But, unlike Kitty, her manner was distinguished, and her carriage, without suggesting the slightest affectation, was almost fit for a queen. Her hand, too, which was stretched to take the proffered nosegay, was tapering and delicate. Whoever or whatever Mary Anne might be, she was one of those whom no humbleness of dress or situation can make common; no disenchanting adjuncts in the way of domestic surroundings can altogether deprive of dignity.

"Thank you very much, Luke," she said in a low, musical voice. "They can scarcely be sweeter than the last ones were."

"I have to take what I can find, Mary Anne," said Luke, unconsciously tuning his voice into the same key. "Flowers are scarce on the dry prairie, but these came from the mountains."

"And yet their scent is like magnolia blossoms," she went on. "They remind me of the South."

"Put them in your hair, Mary Anne," said Luke; "we're to have a spree to-night—a kind of a blow-out to celebrate our safe crossin' of the mountains; so you girls can make yourselves as pretty as you please."

"Well, then, be off, Luke," exclaimed his mother, "and don't be a henderin' of 'em, for they've lots of chores to do, and father 'll be hollerin' for supper."

Luke reluctantly descended from his perch, and joined the active party outside. By this time a large fire was blazing merrily at a convenient distance from the banks of the stream, the cattle were comfortably settled for the night, buffalo robes spread upon the ground, and preparations for a feast in active progress. Bridget, a stout Irish lass, long the faithful follower of the Armstrong family, was busily getting steaks from the elk, and preparing a generous number of the birds for a "stew" in a huge iron pot. Some of the men were still engaged at various necessary labors, while others, having finished their share of the work, were stretched on skins before the fire. Not that its heat was much needed, but the habit of forming a circle around the blazing logs was strong, and all readily fell into it. This circle, indeed, constituted a sort of evening parliament whereat the discoveries and adventures of the day, and the projects and chances of the morrow, were regularly debated and determined.

It has been remarked that Seth Armstrong had made up his party with not a little sagacity. The primary objects were of *course* security and efficiency; that is, numbers sufficient to *deter attack or resist* it, and yet not too many to endanger quarrels

or divided counsels; and discreet selection, with a view to avoid the incumbrance of indolent, sickly, or otherwise objectionable companions. Seth was no great expert himself in frontier work, albeit a tolerable woodsman, a stanch husbandman, and a steady shot. He had, however, a great deal of self-reliance, and liked to cherish it. When he determined to cross the continent, he had first provided himself with a large map, which was as accurate as a sketch of a partly unexplored country on a scale of fifty miles to the inch is likely to be. Such as it was, he had given it careful and protracted study, measured the distances his teams were likely to accomplish in various hypothetical periods, considered the relative positions of well-known constellations with reference to their line of march at such epochs, and, in general, so fortified himself as to feel sure that he would not convey his charge to the Russian possessions or the city of Mexico. Having made this progress, Seth made it his business to seek out some one who had been on the plains before, and, whatever his other knowledge or deficiencies, should have experience at all events in this. He had no great difficulty in finding such an assistant in the long Kentuckian called Dick Railes, a personage whom it would not have been difficult to persuade to undertake a journey to any part of the habitable, or for that matter, uninhabitable globe, but who, if he had a choice at that time for one thing over another, preferred to try his luck in the gold diggings of California. Dick had been as far as the Rocky Mountains as long ago as '40, he said; and onct he'd been across to the highest peak away to the northward, when the Pathfinder set up the proud banner of our universal nation on that uncomfortable and hitherto inaccessible acclivity. Dick had, however, sundry little weaknesses and eccentricities of temper; and his knowledge was, moreover, of a merely popular character, highly useful no doubt, but not precisely of that exhaustive description which one likes to depend upon exclusively when life, fortune, and worldly goods are at issue. This is perhaps not exactly the form wherein Seth would have set forth what he felt to be a deficiency in the material of his party; still it expresses substantially his view of the case. He, therefore, considered himself very fortunate when he stumbled upon a man of science, who was not only capable of taking observations with a theodolite or a sextant, but who also was seeking a party with whom to cross the plains. This was one Doctor Landale, a hard headed Scotchman of forty, who had been bred a surgeon, had followed his profession zealously for a dozen years, and had taken a fancy to turn civil engineer at six-and-thirty. *Whether this caprice* was consequent upon a deter-

mination to visit new countries, where he might wisely have strings to his bow, did not appear; be that as it may, ho Seth satisfied himself after his own fashion of the doctor's capa most especially with reference to exact science; and the sigh a transit instrument, a theodolite, a dumpy level (Troughton Simms'), together with that of a formidable set of draughting struments, quite took his confidence by storm. Furtherm the doctor agreed to pay a certain sum towards the expense transport and provision, which sum being rather in excess what he got from others of the party who had no special tainments to enhance the mercantile value of their society, isfied the thrifty yeoman remarkably well.

Besides those already mentioned, there were two yo men, farmers' sons, and friends of Luke from Ohio; a qu and good-humoured looking person, who described himsel having lately "kept store" at Biddeford, Maine; an enormo powerful backwoodsman, who "belonged" in one of the w ern counties of Illinois; a couple of sturdy Irishmen, " "worked their passage" by special agreement with Seth A strong; and, lastly, a slight young man from Massachus called Hugh Gifford.

When Luke descended from the wagon he found the p in high spirits, and interested in a not unusual species of cussion between Dr. Landale and Dick Railes.

"'Spose now, doctor, you was to lose your th'oderlite sextant and the fixins, and was to git stuck in the middle of pararie without 'em, then whar would you be? I could *my* way by the sun, and the trees, and the different kind sile, and the lay of the land; but whar would *you* be?"

"I'd just find my road without either of the tools you m tion, and without either of yours, for that matter, altho the sun is a very good guide. Why, man, a couple of p and a lighted brand would give us the meridian any night could see the north star; and it's easy enough to keep a c reckoning with such steady travellers as Seth Armstro oxen."

"Wall, if you could git along so well without 'em, wh the use o' the gimcracks, so much frettin' and worryin' to c 'em safe, and you bilin' over half the time about their gi out of 'justment, and local attraction disturbin' the needle, what not? I take it a straight eye and a clear head is as g measures for lines and distances as all the science things kin scare up. I don't see no use in 'em 'cept to scare off the

juns, p'raps, who allus thinks a round thing with a hole int's bound to go off."

"If you were squatting on a quarter section, Master Railes, with pushing neighbors on either side, or coming on a savage coast in winter, when a mile or so might make the difference between death and safety, you'd want something more mathematical, I'm thinking, than clear heads and straight eyes to demonstrate your position."

"As to the quarter sections, they run 'em off down our way without no spy-glasses; jest a jacob-staff and a compass, and what they call a Gunter's chain; eighty on 'em on a side, and then blaze a tree. They don't use no spy-glasses like your'n, nor no triangulations."

"None that you see, perhaps. To simplify the work, as they think, they may divide the square mile as you say with nothing more than the field-compass and chain; but the lines of the townships, at least, are located more accurately, or the sum of errors would lead to hopeless confusion. The system you quote is a bungling one at best, and could only answer in a new country, where land is abundant and claimants few."

"And as to savage coasts," continued the Kentuckian, pursuing the thread of his former reply, "I don't know nuthin' about 'em, and I don't want to know nuthin'. Pararies and Injuns is savage enough for me. I don't want no water round that ain't fresh, I don't. What it's made for I can't see, 'cept it is to give the folks in the Atlantic States an excuse to tax the hull country for building ships and forts that ain't wanted."

"Why, Dick," cried Luke Armstrong, laughing, "you wouldn't leave the country without a navy, would you? Or the coasts and sea-ports without defences?"

"What good does the navy or the forts do us out here?" queried Mr. Railes, obstinately. "We don't own no ships to be purtected; we ain't afraid of nobody else's ships bombardin' our towns. We air an agricultooral people, we air; and we air a goin' on to open up the boundless west, conquerin' and to conquer until the hull continent clear to the Pacific is filled with states as fine and as flourishin' as old Kentucky. Take kear o' number one, that's my idee; we don't want no ships to do that."

"Hooray!" shouted Ichabod, midway in a series of wild gambols with the dog, Lion. "Hooray for Uncle Sam! Hooray for the universal Yankee nation! Hooray for the 'Merikun eagle! We'll all jest sail in and take the hull continent, and drive out the Britishers, and the greasers, and an-

nex Canady, and gobble up Cuby, and clean aout the hull lot on 'em. We'll live on milk and honey, and elk meat and hoecake, and never do any work; and every man shall have ten farms afore he's had time to cultivate one; and we'll all go to Congress and make new laws every day; and we'll have a new President once a week, and Ike will be the first one, and Lion the second! Hooray!"

And Ike commenced an active pantomime, whereof the principal feature consisted in enveloping himself in a buffalo robe and pretending to be a bear, to the great joy but affected fury of Lion.

"Two on one's too many," said Luke, with his good-natured laugh. "The Doctor can't argue with Ike and you both, Dick. He'll hev to give in."

"Dick's more'n half right," growled Nahum Pelter, the gentleman from Illinois, preceding his opinion with an appalling extrusion of tobacco juice. "We don't want no ships 'cept on the great lakes. We *must* have 'em thar to keep the Britishers in order."

"The only good I could ever see in ships," proceeded Dick Railes, thus heavily reinforced, "is to tote cotton and terbacker; and furrin ships might as well do that as any others. Labor's cheaper with them, and, naterally, they can kerry the prodoose for less money."

"And sposin' there was a war with the nation ownin' the ships?" put Jabez Fitch, with the air of a man having a thirst for useful information.

"Then," answered Dick, confidently, "then we'd jest hive our stuff till the fightin' was over. We could git along better without their ships than they could git along without our cotton and terbacker."

"Arter all, Dick Railes," said Seth Armstrong, joining in the discussion, "arter all, you can't be in right down airnest in what you say. If we hadn't had no ships and no commerce, we mightn't have had the population or the money to set up all these here great Western States at all. Where would have been the wealth of New England ef it hadn't been for her trade with the East and West Indies? And where would have been the honor of the nation ef we hadn't had war ships ready when we fit agin impressment and the right of search in '14? What's the difference where the ships is built, or where they go, so long as they're owned by and fightin' for the hull country?"

"The difference is," said Mr. Railes, with a dogmatic evasion *of the issue, "the* difference is that the South and West is self-

of the issue, "the difference is that the South and West is self-supportin', and the North and East ain't."

"Look a here," exclaimed Nahum Pelter, ejecting his customary *avant courier*; "look a here! We kin live on this ere pararie without any help from the Yankee States or rotten old Europe either. We kin find elk, and antelope, and buffalo, and bar enough to eat, and their skins will keep us warm. We kin git corn almost for nothin', for one man's sowing'll feed ten. If you poke round here long enough, I'll find ye coal, and lead, and sulphur, and nitre, and iron; let alone red cinnabar, copper, or, for the matter o' that, what we're all huntin' for, gold. Now, if we've got all we want, and other folks come along and want to trade with us, it stands to reason that to do't is for *their* advantage, and not for our'n."

"That's so," quoth Dick Railes, approvingly.

"You can't find no gold," cried Ichabod. "Nobody knows where the gold is but Ike. He knows where there's mountains of it—more'n ever was found in Indy or Peroo; enough to make ye all so blamed rich ye'd cook yer elk in gold pots, and wear crowns from now to never. Ike knows where it is, only 'twould kind a spile ye and make ye wild to let ye have it, so he'll keep it for himself."

"What you say, Pelter," said Seth, "*sounds* reasonable enough, but I'm afeard it's one-sided, arter all. What do *you* think about it, Mr. Gifford?" he continued, to the young man from Massachusetts, who had hitherto listened, without taking part in the discussion.

"I?" answered the latter. "Why, Mr. Armstrong, I should say that the West can't do without the ships, nor the East without the prairies."

"A politic conclusion, Mr. Gifford," said Dr. Landale, "and one which does credit to your tact, if it be not altogether convincing to either disputant."

"Why, as to that, who agrees or disagrees with two disputants never satisfies either. However, I expressed my belief. You have been long enough with us now to know that there are great differences of opinion among the Americans."

"To be sure, to be sure," replied the Doctor. Large country, mixed people—miscellaneous educations—*tot homines, tot sententiæ.*"

"What's that?" asked Mr. Pelter, in an undertone, of Dick Railes.

"Something about the Th'odolite," explained the latter.

"Now, *then, gentlemen,* supper supper!" cried Seth Arm-

strong. "Here's mother and the gals bringin' the tea and the hoe-cakes cooked, and Bridget's got steaks enough cut for a regiment."

"Supper with all my heart," said the Doctor. "I'd much rather discuss elk steaks than abstract questions, however interesting or instructively set forth."

"Amen," said Luke. "Besides, this is a night of jollity, to celebrate gettin' safe through the mountains. Come, Dick, extra whiskey to-night, you know."

"That suits me," responded Mr. Railes, complacently.

"And won't hurt none on us for once," remarked Seth. "I ain't one o' these kind o' men who'd keep the boys from a cheerful drop now and agin."

"Whiskey for Ike," chimed in that personage; "whiskey for Ike, and a drop for Lion. Whatever Ike gits—elk or teal, hoe-cake or whiskey—Lion has some too."

"Now, boys, here's the tea comin'," continued Seth. "Take tea with supper, and keep your whiskey for your pipes arterwards. Who has the fust watch to-night, Luke?"

"Mr. Gifford and Ike."

"That's well. They ain't so like to need sleep, p'raps, as the rest. Now, then, mother, we're all sharp set enough for two. Set the steaks a brilin', Bridget, and git out the teacups."

These latter consisted of tins, which served for all drinkables alike, and were soon in use, together with plates of the same durable material. The supper was abundant and savory, and high good humor prevailed among the party. Lion was not forgotten by his zealous friend, who, after giving the honest creature his fill, produced a violin, on which he played with considerable skill and facility. Then there were songs about Old Virginny, and Carolina, and Tennessee, and the Ohio River, and yaller gals, and old homes, *ad libitum*. Afterwards there were some rude but jovial and hearty essays at dancing, and when the dancers were too weary to trip it longer they reclined on their buffalo robes, and took to story-telling. So that it was very late when the festivities at last came to a close, and the moon went to rest, and left the stars to shine down in unobstructed splendor upon the little camp, which now became as placid and still as it had lately been full of life and merriment.

CHAPTER III.

A LONG journey by land has many features in common with a long passage by sea. There are the same likes and dislikes, the same jealousies and repinings, the same horror of particular faces and expressions which one gets to loathe in the most uncharitable manner, to be requited, perchance, by being loathed in return. There are, too, the same speedy detections of sympathy by kindred natures; the same binding together of tastes, and amusements, and caprices, so that nothing is more frequent on sea or shore than to find a set of people split into little cliques and factions, each as complete in itself and repellent of the others as if the different members were of opposite and hostile nationalities. The land passage has the advantage of the water in that it presents more variety of scenery, and, generally speaking, entails more physical exertion; circumstances less conducive to ennui than the dreary monotone and listless apathy of the ocean are apt to be. It has not, however, the same opportunities which state-rooms and cabins afford, either for solitary communing or relief from enforced companionship.

When the party of Seth Armstrong first set forth from St. Louis there were, as was quite natural, a great many proffers of attention and minor gallantry to the young girl called Mary Anne from the men, most of whom were young, and, of the four women of the party, only herself and Kitty Armstrong being eligible. Such advances the girl had received with simple courtesy, speaking kindly to all without *hauteur* or reserve, but yet managing, with a tact rather remarkable at nineteen, to prevent either from considering himself peculiarly favored by encouragement. Leading questions, such as most Americans below a certain grade of intelligence and education are by no means too delicate in withholding, she contrived, without giving offence, to avoid. Conversation which tended to elicit any exposition of her past life she would ingeniously divert, or, as a last resort, would find refuge in silence. Thus it happened that, by the time the caravan had reached the mountains, while the whole party knew all about the Armstrongs; were well versed in the life and adventures of Dick Railes and Jabe Fitch; had been favored with an autobiography in detail of Mr. Nahum Pelter; were conversant with the business speculations and vicissitudes *of the gentleman* from Biddeford; had even

become familiar with the mingled web of physic and mensura tion, wherein the reminiscences of the cautious Scotchman, Dr Landale, were interwoven, they yet knew nothing at all about the young girl called Mary Anne.

What was most singular was that Seth Armstrong knew almost as little about her as any one else.

"Miss Mary Anne is, I presume, your second daughter?" queried the Doctor, on the second day of the journey.

"Miss Mary Anne? My darter? Wall, no, I expect she's —that is, I dunno—wall, I calculate she's Mary Anne."

With which explanation the Doctor, perforce, remained satisfied; for an introductory "hem" wherewith he prefaced another threatened interrogatory so alarmed the worthy farmer that, unused to diplomatic evasions, he hastily beat a retreat under pretence of "seein' to the tire of that 'ere hindermost wagon."

No one had been more successful than the Doctor; so that Mary Anne continued, so far as the knowledge of the company was concerned, to be Mary Anne; "only this, and nothing more."

The truth was that Mr. Armstrong's acquaintance with the young woman was scarcely a day older than that of any member of the party; and when he hesitated or prevaricated respecting her surname, it was for a reason no more occult than that he simply did not know it.

On the day before the one fixed for setting out, she came to the obscure hotel which was the last rendezvous of his party and asked to see him alone.

"I wish to go across the plains," she said, "to California I have money—can pay for the trouble and expense I may cause. You are going—you have a wife and daughter; let me go with you."

"Why," he hesitated, "it's very sudden—the last minute like. Hain't ye got no friends? I mean no men-folks?"

"No!" the girl answered; "none." She went on, wringing her hands with a kind of terror, and looking over her shoulder as if she expected to be interrupted. "You *must* take me. must leave this place at once. It is death to me to stay her longer."

The farmer looked at her hands. There were two or three handsome diamonds upon them. Then he looked at her attire She was in mourning, her dress of a rich dark material, more shapely and stylish, he thought, than any his Kitty had ever worn. *Altogether* she looked a singular person to be wishing

to cross the plains. Why didn't she go down to Orleans and take the steamer, and cross the Isthmus? She read his thoughts.

"Don't hesitate; you musn't, indeed you musn't. I'll pay well—believe me—and in advance, too. I tell you I must leave Missouri—leave the neighborhood of the Mississippi. I'll give very, very little trouble; and I'll help your wife and daughter. I can be very useful; and—and—see here!"

Her trembling fingers had sought and opened a reticule, and she drew forth a large purple silk purse. It was filled with golden eagles.

"It's curus," thought Seth Armstrong; "dreadful curus." Then aloud and suddenly, "Ye hain't done nuthin' you're ashamed on, and hev to run away to escape the consequences, have ye? cos——"

"No, no, no!" cried she. "I have never done a wrong to man or woman! Never! so help me heaven, never! But——"

She put her face close to Seth's, and whispered a sentence in his ear.

"It's impossible!" he exclaimed; and then again, after a pause, "It can't be."

"As I am a woman it is true."

Another pause longer than before. The farmer put his face in his two hands, cogitated awhile, and then spoke.

"I'll take ye."

"You will! Oh, thanks, thanks! I'll give you——"

"I don't want none o' your money. If you've a mind to help mother and Kitty, you may."

And so it was that Mary Anne had joined the party. She told Seth her Christian name—no other—and by it he introduced her to his helpmate. What further explanations he vouchsafed that exacting lady need not here be recited; enough that they were sufficient to obtain her acquiescence in the arrangement he had made. She offered no objections, and but one recommendation, namely, that the young lady should take off them 'ere duds, and put on others more suitable for the journey; so that the prompt adoption of her suggestion made matters quite amicable all round.

Of all the young men who surrounded her, the one who at the outset had treated Mary Anne with the greatest distance was Hugh Gifford. He was not disrespectful certainly, or even indifferent towards her; for when they casually met he omitted no courtesy due *to a lady whose* position was thoroughly defined *and understood. But* beyond this he made no step. He

contented himself with a grave, commonplace civility, and there paused. Perhaps he admired her rather striking appearance, and that with something of an artist's eye. But no look, no tone, no lingering glance even, which might have been supposed unseen, betrayed such a feeling. Luke Armstrong, who made not the slightest effort to hide his own honest admiration of the girl, expressed surprise not unmingled with indignation at Gifford's insensibility. "There's a gal," he thought, "who steps like a fawn, and talks like a runnin' brook, and who's got a shape and an eye enough to set a man a-fire, and that there young Yankee looks at her for all the world as if she was cut out of a block of ice."

It is one of the many strange perversities of our common nature to seek to make revelations to those who never ask us questions. Had Gifford approached her as the others had, he would have been received in like manner, except, indeed, that his superior education and breeding would have doubtless gained him a gentler spiriting. But the very reserve which tinged his manner, and which would have interposed an insuperable barrier to the confidence of a woman of coarser nature, put Mary Anne at ease with him. Indeed, she felt better acquainted with Gifford before he had spoken a hundred words to her, than weeks of daily intercourse caused her to feel with the others.

Little by little, as time wore on, they began to talk, and to pick up, at first in an odd desultory way, some knowledge each of the other. Sometimes the occasion would be the sudden coming upon some glorious view, when she would involuntarily glance quickly about to catch his eye, and then as swiftly look away again. Sometimes a curious flower or some strange mineral would be discovered, and would draw together as such things will those who, alone of the party save Dr. Landale, could hazard conjecture as to its classification or species. Sometimes the Doctor, who kept a chart and a log, marking the former and making his entries in the latter as the courses and distances for each day were computed, would challenge them to inspect his work, and thus generate discussion. But most frequently these confidences were interchanged on long starry evenings, when it happened that Gifford was on watch and the rest were quiet in sleep. It was the custom of the party to keep watch and watch as on shipboard—a measure highly necessary where Indians as well as wild animals abound; and Ichabod had been early detailed with Gifford. The poor fellow's misfortune did not affect his usefulness in this or in many other

respects; unless he had been, as sometimes happened, over-fatigued; the mind would then fail to control the body, and he would sink into heavy slumbers. However, this watch was numerically stronger than the others, since it included Lion; and, as the dog never slept when his master did, there was no loss of vigilance involved. Mary Anne had kindled in the simple mind of Kitty Armstrong some little taste for astronomy; and the two would emerge from the Castle when all was silent to tell over and watch the constellations. Kitty would soon weary, however, even with the most interesting of teachers, and she would often fall asleep by the camp-fire. Occasionally, Seth Armstrong, anxious for the safety of his flock, would turn out from his comfortable berth and take a survey of the state of things; but as he liked Kitty to "get all the learnin' she could," and saw no harm "so long as the gals was together," he never objected to these midnight gatherings.

It was on such an occasion, and on a night like that which followed the merriment described in the last chapter, that Hugh Gifford told Mary Anne something of his early life.

They had been speaking of the motives which had led the little company to brave the toils and dangers of their present journey.

"The father would rather be with his family, the mother will not be separated from her son; the son alone avows his real object, which is, after all, the object of all, gold. They have nothing else to care for, nothing else to hope for. It is what the children have heard of all their lives as the sole end and goal of existence. The yeoman wants it, the backwoodsman wants it, the trader wants it, the very half-wit here wants it, as his poor childish talk, continually dwelling on the subject, proves."

"And do not you, too, want it?" asked Mary Anne gravely.

"I? More than all the others. What am I without it? Nothing. What, in this land, can I be with it? Everything."

"I am sorry."

"Sorry?"

"I should have hoped you had some nobler thought for your future; some purer ambition, some higher aspiration."

"Why go to California, but for gold?"

"Ah, but only as a means to an end. Not for its own sordid sake, but to enable you to do good. To relieve undeserved suffering by making some forlorn ones happy. To help obscure merit onward and *upward in its struggle* to rise above the world, which *might otherwise scorn and* trample upon it. Is there not

more pleasure in this than in mere wealth for its own sake?"

"Perhaps. I think I should like to do good. But one must first have the means. It is idle to speculate on the possible good a man might do while he continues without them."

"You have—pardon me—you have suffered much from the want of money perhaps?"

"Yes and no. Others have been poorer than I; plenty, no doubt, more deserving. But I doubt that many have felt poverty more keenly; have craved so much for wealth, not caring a straw for the luxury it would buy, but to escape the scorn of the vulgar and ignoble whose presence I could not escape; the low and mean, who hated me because they thought me educated without being rich, and who sneered at the idea of a pauper being proud."

"But you came from Massachusetts, the State which spends so much money for free schools; the State which of all others should hold education and brains in the highest esteem; the State where money as compared with intelligence should carry lowest honor."

"It may be so in theory; I only know what it is in practice. I only know that from the schools themselves—where the rich men's sons lord it in pitying scorn over their poorer mates—to the churches and courts, and marts of trade, gold is the measure of each man's standing, reputation, influence. Is this unnatural? It is such a measure for the simplest of reasons, because there is no other."

"I have read much of social life in New England, and what I have read scarcely consists with what you say. Has not your case been a peculiar one? Have you not been—if you will let me say so—have you not been too sensitive?"

"Possibly! You shall judge. I thank Heaven that for a time, at least, I have left New England behind me. There may be society there more elevated—a moral atmosphere more genial than I have any knowledge of. My own experience stamps the first as narrow, selfish and conceited—the second as inconceivably grovelling and sordid. I will tell you something of that experience, although I fear it has little to interest you. I will tell you because you may find in it something to palliate views and feelings which may strike you, perhaps, as warped and cynical."

"No! I only think you are angry now, because no doubt *you* have been badly treated. You must know I am rather *prejudiced. I have* for years regarded New England as a sort *of haven of justice* for all kinds and conditions of men; a place

ɜ none could go without being valued, trusted, and
ded for what they are; and that, without regard to the
ɜ or frowns of all the world beside."
ſew England and its people have great merits, no doubt.
ɜ are numbers, without question, who can justly and grace-
ɜound her praises from the depths of their own knowledge,
ɜhe sincerity of their own gratitude. I cannot. True, mine
ɜe a rare, an exceptional case; but such as it is, you shall
ts history."
rose as he spoke, and taking his rifle made one of those
circuits of the sleeping camp which it was part of the duty
ɔse on watch now and again to perform. In a few
nts he returned.
have so rarely put confidence in any one," he said rather
ɜntly, as he resumed his seat by the girl's side, "that it
ɜ awkwardly enough to relate my own poor adventures.
vill make large allowance, I am sure, for the want of grace
ɜncy in the narrative."
ry Anne bowed in assent, and as she did so, one or two
burning logs of the camp fire fell in and the flames shot
th a ruddier glow; and if Hugh Gifford had been looking
sely as most men would have looked at the lovely face
ɜ him, he might have seen, or fancied, a warmer interest than
nere assent implied. He went on with his story:
ıy father was an Englishman, who left his native land early
ɜ. Why he did so, and why in doing so he chose America
home, I never knew. When he died, I was still to young
ve been told of such things; and afterwards, if any about
of them, none took the trouble to enlighten me. My
was unfortunate, very. Perhaps I ought to say that his
weaknesses were the active causes of his misfortunes; but
not like to say that, for none knew what he may have
ed in his youth, and miserable detractors said it too often,
were unworthy to tie his shoes. He was a gentleman, I
. A gentleman by birth, by breeding, by education. If
ıct had happily been unknown to my early associates, my
ight have been the pleasanter.
ſy father married, too, in this country. The marriage was
happy one Over this I would also draw a veil, so far as
may. An Englishman's idea of the duty of a wife, and
nerican woman's of that of a husband might easily clash,
ɜse experienced in both perfectly well know. Still they
have agreed and been happy, had they been left to
elves. *She was a pure-minded* and conscientious woman,

and, albeit he gave her much cause for complaint, she wou have gained an influence which might have softened and co trolled his foibles and laid the basis for a happy future. S was very young at the time of their marriage, and her charac had scarcely had time to mature. When it might have done with results all-important to the whole lives of both my pare and that of their child, my mother's brothers interfered, a sowed the seeds of incurable dissension between herself and l husband. They took advantage of my father's temporary abser —an absence unfortunately connected with his besetting wea ness—to poison her mind against him. They persuaded her return a letter reversed, and otherwise unanswered, which had sent her. The expedient succeeded, and my father a mother, in this world at least, never met again.

"These men, the brothers, thought they were doing th sister a service. As to my father, they were utterly incapal of understanding or appreciating him. They were men in bu ness, not exactly tradesmen, but a step or two above it; a with true New England feeling they conceived that their reg lar attention to daily routine, and their smug companionsl with other common-place money-grubbers like themselves, c dowed them with a worldly status far above that of my fath who was poor, irregular in his habits, and—a gentlema While they thought they were doing their sister a service, th were not sorry for an opportunity to humiliate a man they h never quite understood, but had always somewhat feared. I possessed accomplishments which they at once envied a disliked. He had personal courage and artistic tastes, whi they pretended to despise or to consider affected; but which, reality, they knew to be the badges and signs of a superi nature to their own, the marks of blood which no prosperi could have emphasized, any more than any misfortune or ev vice could altogether obliterate."

"I know the kind of man you mean," said Mary Ann softly.

"These men were vindictive, too, as well as short-sight and cowardly. When my father married, although not rich, was affluent as compared with them. They were young in t world, needy, almost friendless, almost homeless. He to them by the hand, aided them to the utmost of his power, c couraged, advanced, stood by them. They were of the tr reptile breed, and they never forgave him. They got on a *prospered, as* the little world went in which they moved, and *the same time my* father had been going downward. His fau

were patent enough, but they were not the men to school him on them. They attempted to do so, however, and they never pardoned the rebuke which they had thus provoked.

"Therefore, when they had contrived to bring about a rupture between my father and mother; when they had managed to put asunder those whom God had joined together; they went about with busy lies and innuendoes and prevarications, to the end that public opinion might trample my father still deeper into the mire, and that my mother, well plied with their accounts of his misconduct during the term of their separation, should learn to regard as final and insuperable the barrier they had erected between herself and her husband. It became so; the efforts of a few kindlier hearts, who remembered the brightness and promise of the early days of their marriage, for they were both very handsome and attractive people, never surmounted it.

"But New England is very observant and sharp-tongued whenever, from whatever cause, any suspension occurs of ordinary marital relations. If man and wife must perforce separate, they had best keep out of the territory of the Pilgrims. My mother was too proud to explain, to remonstrate, or to propitiate, and she was neither rich enough nor strong enough to brave the world's opinion. Her position grew more equivocal and more difficult as time wore on. Then her brothers, who had young families growing up, were thriving in their callings, and were full of social ambition, treated her with more and more distance and coldness. Finally, the slender thread snapped altogether, and they never met at all. Thus my poor mother was deserted by the kindred who had brought about her greatest misfortune in life. She lingered on for a few years and died. Some people called her mortal illness by one name, and some by another; but she died of a broken heart."

"And your father?"

"He, too, died; it was a year before her, and the circumstances were very painful. His death, no doubt, accelerated her own. Meanwhile, I had been sent to various schools. I was ten years old at the time of the separation, and for some time after was left in my mother's unmolested charge. She did all she could for me, nay, more than with her slender means she was justified in doing; but, as I said before, she was conscientious, and would do more rather than less than her duty. After my eleventh birthday there was some painful litigation, and it resulted in my going to my father; but neither he nor my mother lived until my twelfth."

"You *were, then, left an orphan?*"

"Yes; one of my mother's brothers, the one who had perhaps most heart of the three, sent me to a boarding-school, and afterwards to another and another. I was miserable in all; yet I know not that he could have done better for me. The boys always found out by some inexplicable, but never-lacking instinct, that there was something wrong in my family matters. And they were worthy sons of their New England sires, for they made me feel it more bitterly than if it had arisen through some crime of my own. They also discovered, by more obvious means, that I was very poor—a sin even worse than the other. The first reproach might readily have been condoned, had the conditions of the second been reversed, but the two together were inexpiable. They shunned me, pointed at me between their malignant whispers, wrote bitter taunts in fly-leaves of my school books which fell into their hands. I don't know that they ever analyzed their opinions, but if they did they resolved them down to the firm basis that a boy whose parents lived apart, and who at the same time had no money, ought not, as a matter of propriety, to be allowed to live; and, God knows, if they entertained such a conviction, I shared it with them.

"I had few companions, and hardly ever joined in the usual boyish sports. I would not obtrude myself, and I was rarely invited. Those of my schoolmates who were better off—by far the larger number—seemed to despise me, and, at all events, they avoided me as if I were a Pariah. The very few who were even humbler than myself, or younger, or more ignorant, usually discovered that I was the son of an Englishman, and cherished a prejudice on that account. I believe they thought my father had some mysterious connection with Greville's wickedness, or had had a hand in the preparation of the Stamp Act. Nearly all these boys were mean and acquisitive; they were shop-keepers and money-grubbers in embryo. They swapped knives, gambled for marbles, and were continually over-reaching each other in juvenile speculations, thus actively preparing for the business of life. They had all the greed, the narrowness, the sectarian pride, and exclusiveness of their progenitors, in little; you will not wonder that I liked them no better than they liked me.

"I was the son of an Englishman, and few transplanted trees will thrive. From my earliest youth I found, irrespective of human beings and their peculiarities, much to displease me *and* rouse my aversion in surrounding objects and in natural *vicissitudes. I disliked* the burning heat of the summers, and

the piercing, dismal cold of the winters. I disliked the square, white-painted, wooden houses which covered the hillsides and villages, with the treeless wastes which surrounded, and the mathematically straight roads which led to them. I disliked the unmeaning, fragile meeting-houses, with their monotonous spires, their canting preachers, and the innumerable and indescribable sectarians, their congregations. I yearned for the soft, moist-tempered clime of the olden home, with its winding green lanes, its masses of comfortable foliage, its stout-built little cottages all covered with thatch and running vines, its dear crumbling old churches, all reverend and gray with time, and rich with stores of ivy which had taken so long to grow. Was there necessarily an inseparable bond between unlimited freedom and unlimited ugliness? Must forest trees always be destroyed in republics, and where universal suffrage is must the streets of cities be like chess-boards?"

"You speak of the accidental peculiarities of a new country, not of those of a republic. What you craved comes as the work of time, and not of kings. The republics of Greece and Rome left temples and high places glorious and venerable enough."

"Yes; but I was a boy then, and naturally associated political conditions with their repellent accompaniments; and still, now that I am a man, I find that mental peculiarities present many analogies to physical ones. I find now, as I found then, that the processes which sweep away nobility, national religion, class privileges, whatever their advantage, bring no substitutes as yet for the incentives they displace. It may be untrue that extension of suffrage makes the popular choice of little value, but I know that abrogation of the things I name has practically left no spur for ambition save the hope of wealth. Wherever I turned in my boyhood I saw nothing else. I saw that if I would hold any position in the world, wield any power, be successful in love—anything—I must first of all get money."

"Be successful in love?" repeated Mary Anne.

"Yes. I am coming to the end of my sad, and I fear dull, tale. As you have seen, my childhood was lonely and loveless; my youth was sadder still, for, as I grew older, I felt even more keenly the slurs that were cast upon my station and my origin. Books were almost my only companions. To this, when I had reached the age of sixteen, there came one particular exception. I had been placed in a country attorney's office to read law. A small sum left by my poor father sufficed to pay for my schooling, and to give me this little *start in the* world—scarcely more. I was, *therefore, happily spared what* would have been inexpressibly

odious—the being under pecuniary obligation to my uncle. My solicitude was probably misplaced; for I have since reflected that, had this small sum not existed, he would have thrust me forth long before to shift for myself. In this attorney's office I found a young man, one of the few generous natures I have ever encountered. He was the son of a well-to-do farmer, of Lenox, in Berkshire county. In our vacation he invited me to visit his father's house. I accepted, and there for the first time met his sister. She was very beautiful, and her name was Virginia."

"Was she fair or dark?"

"Fair, very fair. With hair of gold and skin of pearl. She had one charm rare in a New England girl—a low, musical voice; and another not so rare, a sweetly-winning smile. I won't weary you with a conventional love story. We found much to like in each other; for her, none could help being attracted by her, and I suppose I was fascinated into taking great pains to conceal my faults. My visit was repeated again and again, and at last, with her acquiescence, I asked Mr. Chester to sanction our engagement. He listened with kindness, and I thought regarded my suit with favor. When I had concluded, however, he seemed embarrassed, and after a pause said:

"'I like ye very much, Mr. Gifford, and so does John, and so, I expect, does Virginia; but you see there's been a good deal o' talk—your folks, you know, was—that is, you know your father was——'

"'My father was a gentleman, Mr. Chester.'

"'I don't know anything about that; but how much money did he leave ye?'

"I was forced to confess that, at the end of my probation in the lawyer's office, I should not have more than a couple of hundred dollars left. Mr Chester's countenance fell. He went on:

"'I woudn't a cared so much 'bout your folks, you know; though it's a pity—and your father, you know—not but that I've heerd he was a nice man—only folks will talk—but if he hain't left ye no money, what d'ye calculate to git married on?'

"I explained that it was my hope, after being admitted to the bar, to obtain an income through the practice of my profession.

"'Ah, that's dreadful uncertain, ain't it? When I put John in Squire Tarbox's office he told me right out that a young man was'nt likely to git more the fust five year than he'd git by *goin' huckleberryin'*, and John's arrangements was made *accordingly.*'

"This was a dark prospect, and I knew what the farmer said was true. I was not—or rather had not been—without the usual dreams of boyhood, wherein we see ourselves achieving wonders altogether out of the common way. But I knew that even if uncommon obstacles did not lie in my path—which, however, they always did—the average chances at the New England country bar had not been too sombrely painted. I resolved to go to Boston. There a wider field presented itself, and preferment might come faster. Mr. Chester seemed pleased with my resolution and encouraged it.

"'If ye go to Boston ye may git better chances certainly; and I'll tell ye what I'll do. You've got a year longer to read before you're admitted? Well, if you come to me in three years' time, and show me three thousand dollars—that's jest the amount of a mo'gage lyin' on this 'ere farm—all your own money, mind—I dunno as I'll oppose things between you and Virginia. But if this is agreed, I won't have nothin' 'gin out about engagements in the mean time.'

"Upon this basis our bargain was struck. Within the year, I passed, and went to Boston. I struggled hard, read early and late, tasked my energies and my ingenuity to the last degree to fight upward. But it was all in vain. No one seemed to wish to employ me. I had no friends, no influence. My uncles, who might have assisted me, kept aloof. They even went further, and, as I have since heard, secretly disparaged my capacity and my character. Their vengeance on my father was not yet appeased. The three years passed and I was poorer than ever. Just then the news came of the discovery of the gold in California, and I at once determined to make my way thither. I went into Berkshire, explained my position and my new determination, and, with some difficulty, arranged with Mr. Chester for a probation of two years more."

"And does she—Virginia—love you?"

"She has often told me so."

"You will correspond?"

"I am to find letters from her on our arrival."

Such was the story of Hugh Gifford, and such was the manner in which it was communicated to Mary Anne. She accepted it as the record of a highly sensitive nature grown morbid through the stress of a false position and thwarted sensibilities. His yearnings for the life and scenery of the old worn-out land across the sea were the reflexes of much reading; growths sown in discontent and stimulated by the want of sympathy with those around him. *His strong desire for* gold was, to her, something

repugnant and unnatural, and doubtless it lowered him somewhat in her esteem. On the other hand, there was that in his isolation, his delicacy, and his apparent need of sympathy, which constantly attracted her. Whether or not she had gone so far as to allow her feelings to become seriously interested in the young man we need not pause to inquire; but it is certain that the announcement of his engagement gave Mary Anne a sudden shock, an unexpected pang. Hugh Gifford was one of the last men of whom you would think to hear it said that he was engaged to be married; and yet you would have been puzzled, as Mary Anne was, to explain the reason why. After a while you might come to the conclusion, as she did, that there was so much self-restraint, so much reticence in his character, as to make it improbable that he would ever go so far with any woman as to say that he loved her. This sort of man is very generally misunderstood, and almost always misleads those who seek to fathom him. He is like a mill pond, which the higher and closer the dam the more sweeping and abundant is the flood it pours forth when the barrier is once overleaped.

Whatever the girl's sentiments might have become, whatever seeds might have found lodgment in her breast capable of quickening into blossoms, this name of Virginia had been a spell, if not to freeze and destroy, at least to thrust them away far from the light into her heart's innermost recesses. If any observer could have suspected her feelings before, they should never have grounds for suspicion hereafter. Every avenue was guarded henceforth with trusty sentinels of maidenly reserve. Mary Anne and Gifford were good friends for the future, and nothing more.

In the capacity of friends then, they had many a discussion and, perhaps, some useful interchange of thought. It has been seen that Mary Anne's opinions of New England had been assailed, not to say outraged, by the tale which she had heard. Ever since she had learned to read, New England, and especially Massachusetts, had been cherished in her convictions as the happiest and justest of communities; the Utopia where, if ever social and political justice had existed on earth, they could be sought and found. In New England was labor respected, intellect cherished, virtue canonized, gray hairs reverenced. In New England was truth discovered, thought unshackled, merit sought out with diligence and crowned with honor. In New England was the place of sanctuary, the refuge of the oppressed, *the cradle of liberty*!

To her, Boston was more than Mecca to a true believer, and

Faneuil Hall greater than the Holy Temple. And was this hallowed country, this vaunted intellectual and moral paradise, this exemplar among the nations, no more than the home of a vulgar and base-minded plutocracy? The lair of a crew of idolaters setting up a worship more ignoble and more sordid than that of the veriest slaves who ever crawled to thrust their necks under the foot of a tyrant? They were in fine condition truly, these republicans, to despise the subjects of kings! There might be something at least of dignity in such a potentate—ancient lineage, the association of a magical name with heroic deeds of the past, long-time consent, and reverence of ancestors; but what could there be about this wretched parvenu, this monarch of yellow earth, that the children of the Puritans should fall down and worship him!

Alas, alas! that the purest and most aspiring should be little abler than the meanest to shake off burthens, to shiver the yoke of oppressors, without taking on of themselves yokes and burthens of different but no nobler species, in the room of those they have bled and died to break and to destroy!

After all, what right had Hugh Gifford to speak thus of his home, of the land which gave him birth? His views were unjust, distorted, seen with a jaundiced eye; for by his own confession he was disappointed, nay, disgusted with his lot. Her own estimate of New England might be the truer one yet; and still had he not lived there all the days of his life, and she, not one? Was he not better fitted to form a judgment, to express a censure? Perhaps; but then again she remembered how lovingly he had spoken of Old England—of her green fields and hoary ruins, her placid streams and happy rural homes—of the order and comfort of her society, where all were by the law equally protected, whether living in haughty castles or in those lowly, comfortable cottages. What did he know of the Old England more than she knew of the New? He had never been in the one any more than she had been in the other. And she—she could tell a bitterer tale of wrong and oppression than had ever fallen to his lot; had greater cause to magnify the beauty of a distant picture by comparison with the poverty or discomfort of that which is near. Evidently they had the same disposition, how different soever their natures otherwise might be—the disposition which comforts and gilds so much of life in this iron world of ours, to idealize the unknown.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE was that about Mary Anne to more than justify even the extravagant admiration of Luke Armstrong. She was a woman, indeed, who would have attracted more attention in a London ball-room than on a western prairie; since where nature is most unchecked and luxuriant we look for physical types to correspond as matters of course. You might have thought, in regarding her, of Diana and Juno; but you would have been sure to feel, a moment after, that there was too much womanliness about the girl to vindicate her comparison with either. There was an ease and freedom about her carriage which, for some inexplicable reason, is uncommon with American women: for, although the European organization, being transplanted, does unquestionably acquire, sooner or later, certain aboriginal characteristics, the particular ones of grace and dignity in movement and bearing, so marked in the American savage, are not reproduced in his civilized successor.

Perhaps Mary Anne was the gainer in grace through being untrammelled with unsightly crinoline; yet, as this was an immunity she enjoyed in common with the Armstrongs, mother and daughter, as also with the unsophisticated Bridget, neither of whom walked or stood like her, it was clearly nature and not art which was to be credited for the advantage. Her limbs, not being confined in an iron cage then, moved with freedom, and answered the purpose for which they were made, without any suggestion of indelicacy, such as the admirers and promoters of iron cages are fond of detecting in their absence. The girl was unconventional in another respect; for her massive black locks were neither frizzled nor padded, nor strained backwards with that Chinese and eye-torturing effect sometime popular with the experts of fashion. Her forehead was high, but the hair grew low, so low as to be almost a defect, and was parted straight across the brows. The eyebrows and lashes were, like the hair, of a jetty black; the latter would have seemed, when the eyes were closed, superfluously lengthy and sweeping; but when they opened, the eyes were found large enough to justify such abundant curtains. The nose was straight, the lips perfect, and the teeth dazzlingly white. If the face had a fault, it was that the *chin was a trifle too* large; it expressed, perhaps, too much will *to be in strict* harmony with the rest of the features.

As we have seen, she wore a gown of plain worsted stuff, which fitted closely to a figure whose comeliness left nothing to desire. The hands and feet, without being remarkably small, were beautifully shaped; and although the latter might have appeared to better advantage than in their deerskin moccasins with sole of elk, which were found best for general purposes on the prairie, and the former had become somewhat browned by the sun, their natural symmetry could not be altogether concealed.

The inner nature of this young woman was well expressed in her physical development. So far as enthusiasm, ardency, strength of the inclinations, warmth of the attachments may go, she was a true child of the South. With less heart she might have been cruel, and might still be revengeful: with less intellect she might have been passionate and voluptuous. But happily the elements were tolerably well balanced, and whatever might lie below the surface, there was enough above it to make Mary Anne dangerously attractive.

It was not surprising, then, that Luke Armstrong should be attracted; but it certainly seemed remarkable that Hugh Gifford was not. So much so, in truth, to Luke himself, that he lost all sense of jealousy, knowing as he did that the pair were much together, when he thought of it.

Two beings could scarcely have been more opposite than the southern girl and the young New Englander. He was slight, not tall, but deep-chested and strongly built, with short, light hair, tending to curl, Saxon-looking eyes and complexion, and a rather firmly set mouth and chin. He presented few, if any, of the national traits, which require, as a rule, more than one generation to bring forth, and his speech had none of the twang common in his section. This deficiency, by no means regarded as meet for congratulation, was imputed by Dick Railes, Jabe Fitch, and their fellows, to what they termed "too much scholarin'."

If there had been nothing approaching to flirtation, however, between these young people, there grew up a great deal of friendly and sympathetic intercourse; and although the news of Hugh's engagement might have been unwelcome to her, there was nothing in Mary Anne's subsequent manner which could be perceptibly traced to such a feeling. She was not quite as ready afterwards, perhaps, to speak of her own childhood, albeit she had promised to do so in the way of reciprocity when Hugh had described his own; but she would not break her word, and, after being once or twice reminded, she proceeded to fulfil it.

"*My story is very brief,*" she said, "and has little, I fear, to

interest, because, until within the twelvemonth passed, it has contained so little of pain. The first sights I can remember are those of warm colors, loving faces, and rich scenery, of bounteousness and affluence both within and without. The first sounds are those of voices melodious with affection, of brilliant music tastefully played, of the songs of birds, and the pleasant murmurs of brooks which ran through our plantation to swell the Mississippi. The first odors are those of roses, of orange-blossoms, and magnolias. Those were dear days, and I was very—very happy."

"How can you be drawn toward our bleak, sterile New England, if your happiness sprang from associations such as these?"

"These are mere gratifications of the senses, are they not? They may be pleasant in reminding us of those we loved, who were with us when surrounded by them. New England I have honored for something which, with all its blessings and delights, was not to be found in my early home. As a child I did not miss it, and these sights, and sounds, and odors, are always with me when I think of those who were inexpressibly dear. My father almost idolized me. There was nothing that money could buy, nothing that anxious affection could desire, which was wanting to minister to my health, my enjoyments, my education."

"Ah, you had always wealth, then?" said Hugh, thoughtfully.

"Always. I thought to be very unhappy now, but one of the comforts—the consolations—seems to me to be without it."

The young man shook his head incredulously.

"It is quite natural you should not think so; perhaps you may hereafter. We had a plantation near the great river, and here we passed the summers;—summers full of light and joy; with pleasant friends and choicest books; with charming drives and lovely views. There could not well be a happier life than mine was then, and I remember my fondest wish was that it should remain so always. I was not sent to school like the daughters of neighboring planters, so I did not see many of them; and, indeed, most of our friends came from a distance; but I had private teachers, for my father wished me to be accomplished, and would spare neither money nor pains to that end. In the winters we went to New Orleans, my father and a sister of his, to whom we were both much attached, and I. We always took the same servants, and our house was always ready for us in town. There we had the opera—I was passionately fond of the opera, and *races, and parties,* and sometimes balls, though my father was *particular where I* went, and on such occasions insisted on his

sister as well as himself being one of the party. This, of course, was when I grew up—I mean five years ago—I am one-and-twenty now."

"These people we are with must be strangely offensive—I mean very distasteful to you."

"No; they are very good and kind. It is not their fault that they have never been in society, or spent money on accomplishments, or learned to speak quite correctly. They are a little brusque sometimes, but I know they mean no harm, and so it does not give me pain. I have been used to ignorant people with good hearts all my life, and never learned to despise them. Besides, they have given me a sanctuary—a refuge——"

"A refuge?"

"Yes; I shall come to that soon. As I have said, I was very happy. My teachers were carefully selected, and I had none of the misfortunes in the shape of malignant or ill-taught nurses or others having control of my infancy, which, as I have read, often warp the nature of children, and inflict irreparable injury. I had a happy childhood, and the best of fathers."

"And your mother?"

A flush came up into the girl's face, but the camp fire was not bright enough at the moment for Hugh Gifford to see it.

"I never remember seeing her; she died when I was very—very young, and those about me never spoke of her."

"She died abroad, perhaps?"

"No, not abroad; but it was long after her death before I was old enough to understand such things, and by that time those about me had, I suppose, forgotten it."

"And your father—did he never speak of her?"

"Sometimes, when we were alone together; but I had rather not speak more of her just now, please."

"Pray forgive me; had I thought the subject was painful—"

"No, no; it is not, at least it should not be. Besides, I have no right to reserve my confidence after you have given me yours."

"Nay, I exact no such literal recompense. I questioned because I surmised that your own, like my dear mother, might have been unhappy."

"Alas, I fear she was, very, very unhappy."

"But let us speak no more of that; go on about yourself."

"You will understand that life was so bright and beautiful all around me, that my thoughts never dwelt upon things that were sad. You have seen song-birds carolling and frolicking among the flowers when *everything* about them is bathed in warm,

genial sunshine when their needs and their pleasures are lavishly supplied without labor or care; when their thoughts are farthest from the damp, dusky night, and they make no provision for the pinching winter? The night must come in its due course, the winter must be felt in its season, but they, the gay and thoughtless ones, have no heed for the one or the other. So was it with me through all my early life. My father's care prepared me for everything exeept to meet adversity."

"He hoped to shield you always from it."

"Doubtless; and for me, I never dreamed that such hopes are never realized. Perhaps, too, his views had more than usually exists to justify them. We were rich; and it was probable that we should always so remain."

"There was much to warrant hope in that."

"Ah, you think so much of money; and yet, after all, what did it do for me?"

"Everything, I should say, from your story so far, or next to everything. Does not all the happiness which surrounded you, the luxury which lapped your childhood, the pleasures which gilded your youth, the travel which enlarged, the tuition which instructed your understanding, did not these all depend upon the possession of wealth?"

"They did; and yet perchance I had been happier if the wealth had never been—if I had been born as poor as I now am, and am likely to be for the future."

Hugh looked at her with his incredulous smile. "How easy it is to talk of the nothingness of riches, of the luxury of honest poverty! How much we hear of it in our pulpits; how much we read of it in our newspapers! Turn where we will, we are confronted with endless babble of the dignity of labor, of honest toil, of hard-handed industry! And what is the sum and substance of all? A bubble—a most illusory, transparent, and empty bubble! Why, the preachers and the scribblers who teach this doctrine are the most grasping and avaricious of all! What do they care for, think of, pray for, whether rising, sitting, walking, or sleeping? Gold!—gold—nothing but gold!"

"Gold," murmured Ike, as he lay half asleep, his red head pillowed as usual on Lion's curly back; "Gold," he repeated, "they're all arter it! Hoosier from the backwoods, pedlar from the town, chaps from Old England, chaps from New England, farmer to buy new steers, farmer's wife to buy new chiny. All arter the gold!—nothing but gold!"

"And yet," said Mary Anne, gently, "and yet it brought me the first suffering of my life, it brought me its greatest crisis of

danger and pain; and when I pray, it is always that wealth, or the love of it, may not make my life for the future altogether wretched."

"Riddles," said Hugh, "or fantasies. The gold is real, tangible, solid."

"Solid gold," echoed the half-wit; "Ike knows where 'tis; acres of it, oceans of it, mountains of it! But he won't tell; oh, no! 'Twould kind o' hurt ye and set ye back to git too rich all in a minute! So we'll keep it for ourselves, Lion and me—Lion and me." He smoothed and patted the dog's head as if sealing the compact, and Lion looked at his master with a wise, trustful acquiescence in his watchful eyes, as Ike turned heavily over and fell asleep again.

"Not riddles—not fantasies," continued Mary Anne, "but hard, pitiless, realities. It was because we were rich, and because the fame of it went abroad, that the first bitter hours I had ever known came upon me. When I was eighteen, there came on a visit to our country home a gentleman we had met the winter before in New Orleans. He was young, rich, gifted, it was said, and belonged to one of the proudest families in Louisiana. My father liked him much, and rather courted his society; urged him, indeed, to pay us this visit with an object that I only afterwards divined. That object you can readily guess."

"He wished him to become your suitor?"

"He did; and in truth there was much about him to attract any woman, especially one so young and inexperienced as I was. My father was wise, too; he imposed upon me no command, scarce even a wish, but I could not help seeing that it was agreeable to him that Mr. Du Solle and I should be much together—riding, walking, playing, the various pursuits and amusements of a country life."

"Mr. Du Solle was handsome?"

"He was thought so; to me he always seemed too dark; he had a Spanish face with glittering teeth; handsome when he smiled, but forbidding and harsh if he frowned. He was agreeable enough, however, and evidently took pains to make himself liked. Still, I felt sure from the moment I saw his and my father's aim, I felt sure that I could never love him, and I think he knew it too. But matters went on, as they will in such cases, and it came to be generally bruited about the neighborhood that we were engaged. I often reproach myself with this now. I was cowardly; had I faced my father's anger and his indignation, had I told him betimes that I could never love that man, the terrible consequences might have been spared."

"Terrible?"

"Most terrible, as you will hear. The time came at last when Mr. Du Solle declared himself. He asked me to become his wife. I was forced to be candid then, and I told him the truth. He pleaded, remonstrated, wept. I would change, perhaps. I felt certain that I never should, but was touched by the evident sincerity of his feelings. He acknowledged that the reputation of my father's great wealth had at first attracted him, but protested that he now loved me for myself alone. Alas! for man's duplicity and falsehood—I believed him. I could not promise to love him, but I yielded to his passionate entreaty, and agreed to delay a week before giving him a final dismissal.

"In that week he made a horrible discovery. By what means I knew not then—know not even now. I did not even know the nature of the discovery itself, so religiously had the truth been kept from me, until another event more awful still had occurred as its consequence. One day—the third after our interview—I had been riding, attended only by a negro servant, for it had been agreed Mr. Du Solle was not to be my escort during the week of probation. I alighted at the portico fronting the main hall of the house, when, with a face like midnight, he suddenly confronted me.

"'So!' he hissed, rather than said, 'so you are a party—you, with your amiable father—to this exquisite conspiracy!'

"'Sir,' I stammered, outraged and astonished, 'what conspiracy mean you—how dare you?'

"'Oh, spare your pretended amazement,' he cried, furious with anger. 'It is likely that eighteen years should pass, and you, forsooth, be still in ignorance.'

"He went on for some moments pouring forth heated abuse of which I cannot now remember a word, but which redoubled my agitation and surprise.

"'Sir,' I gasped at last, 'this is incredible, infamous. Let me pass; let me go to my father!'

"'Your father!' shouted Du Solle, 'your father! Infamous, dishonored as he is. Let him come to me! let him answer for his attempt to disgrace me! The villain! To seek to entrap me, unawares; to link my name, my blood, with the daughter of his——'

"I heard no more, and no more was said, for my father was by my side. He struck Du Solle with dreadful rapidity several heavy blows with his fists, and then kicked him down the steps under my horse's feet. What followed I know not, for I fainted.

"Let me make as brief as may be the horrible sequel. They

fought the next day—a protracted and barbarous duel—and my father was brought home a corpse.

"Even while I was yet in my agony over this cold clay, my nurse, a mulatto woman, who dearly loved me from my birth, poured into my terror-stricken ears the secret whose disclosure had led to this catastrophe. She showed me ample proofs of what she would never, never have revealed, as with bitter tears and lamentations she explained, but for a circumstance which made such a step inevitable. *My father had left no will.* His relatives were coming in haste to claim the estate; and hear it, O God of Heaven! so far from inheriting my father's wealth I must fly, fly, if I would not, by remaining, add to its sum in my own unhappy person.

"I did fly, with speed, with secresy, and at night. I had help at first, for every hand on the plantation would have aided me; but after leaving it there were two days and a half of travel before reaching St. Louis, and I was in constant dread of the telegraph. However, I got to St. Louis in safety.

"Thus you see that, in my case at least, wealth was not altogether a blessing, since it had wrought me the greatest possible curse, the most irreparable affliction. You see, too, that however they may appear so, the motives are not all alike that impel us to this Western pilgrimage; for you go for the sake of Gold, I for Liberty!"

CHAPTER V.

Our travellers had crossed the great chain of the Rocky Mountains upon a line between what is now known as Pike's Peak and the pass called by the early Spanish explorers Sangre de Christo. The little stream whereon they had encamped was in fact one of the mountain sources of the Rio Grande del Norte, a river which, although it has its rise westward of the great chain, finds its way through the pass bearing the same name with itself, and ultimately flows into the Gulf of Mexico, forming the boundary between the latter country and Texas. The next water they would cross in their progress westward would doubtless be an affluent of the Colorado, which empties into the Gulf of California, and the party could then fairly consider itself on the Pacific slope.

The general aim had been to make a course as near due west as possible, and their present latitude differed but little from that of St. Louis, their point of departure. In this policy Seth Armstrong had been materially aided by the observations of Dr. Landale, who, notwithstanding the scarce concealed contempt of Dick Railes, was constant in determining their daily position by means of his instruments. The fact that Indians and trappers could find their way without such assistance seemed to the backwoodsman quite conclusive evidence against its utility, but as he could make converts of neither the Doctor nor Seth Armstrong, his conservative objections to science were unheeded. His daily jest that "the Doctor was goin' to shoot the sun agin," had little effect, therefore, save upon the sympathizing intelligence of Nahum Pelter, who, whenever he heard, received it as a criticism of the first water and pungency. Whereupon Luke, whose nature it was to try, as he said, to "make things run easy," would observe deprecatingly that "Dick was a stubborn cuss about the th'odolite."

"Humph," grunted the Doctor. "All ignorance is stubborn, I take it. If Master Railes were made to go through the first four books of Euclid—if he once got an idea that the circle means anything beyond the shape of the sun or the end of his powder-horn, he'd be pliable enough."

"He don't like book learnin', he'd never take to it."

"Of course not; so for him a theodolite will be a gimcrack, and a sextant will be shooting the sun till the end of the chapter."

"Well, I don't s'pose common folks know much more in the old country than they know here."

"Except to hold their tongues—less about most things else. And their betters are not always so very wise either. There are plenty in England as stupid as your people here, who think when there's a famine over sea which comes of too many mouths, or poor crops, or laziness, or all three, that it's all the fault of that rotten old monarchy and the wicked aristocracy. There are plenty there who'll swear by-and-by, when you get into trouble from slavery and too many voting immigrants, that it's all the fault of your republican institutions—institutions which, in nine essentials out of ten, are precisely the same as their own. We're all shooting the sun to people who don't know what we're doing."

"Yes," argued poor Luke, somewhat bewildered, "but we try to remedy that by spreading education so's to teach folks *to know what you're doing.*"

"*Ay, there's good* in what you do—some good. But there's

a deal of harm, too. It doesn't do a republican boy any good in the long run to cram him with lies about monarchies, or *vice versa;* only the world isn't wise enough yet to find it out."

"I expect ourn's about the best system there is goin'," said Luke, taking refuge in the most current generality he could think of.

"No doubt it is for you, and it's lucky you think so."

Such a concession was quite satisfactory to Luke, who would go on his way rejoicing. The Doctor, however, was more wary in being entrapped into discussion with such stern patriots as Dick Railes or Nahum Pelter, to whom his blunt tenets were not short of flat blasphemy, to be argued to the death in all the stump eloquence they had ever heard of or could master. Still the little circle had become attached and harmonious with the cement of their common cares and hopes; and perhaps there were none but would separate from each of the others with regret.

The morning after the halt broke bright and clear, although the sun was tardy in showing himself above the steeps behind them. Long before he did so the camp was a scene of bustling activity; for, although the halt was nominally for rest and refreshment, there was much to do in the way of comfort and cleanliness, which for the past few weeks had been perforce neglected. Thus, Castle Armstrong was to be cleared out, the remaining packages of provisions to be overhauled and aired, clothes to be washed, rifles and other arms to be cleaned, and a score of minor needs and duties to be attended to during the respite from the march. Half the small stores originally stowed in the provision wagon had now been consumed, and yet when those which were left came to be spread about the ground during the process of scrubbing, it seemed as if it were impossible to get them in again. But Mrs. Armstrong was the possessor of marvellous ingenuity, and, had her spouse permitted her to bring all she wished with the expedition—double the quantity really brought—no doubt she would have managed to pack it in the wagons.

"There was that 'ere Ike," she complained mournfully to Kitty, as she rigorously supervised the hidden operations of Bridget, in the wagon, whence issued profusion of steam and soapsuds. "There was that 'ere Ike, and that big heathen, Lion, —father would bring them, and yet he'd leave behind a'most all my chiny. Not but that the poor critter's well enough, and done chores round the *farm ever since* he was a little tow-headed *boy, and allus earned his salt, if* he is silly, poor thing; and

p'raps he wouldn't a taken to other folks after all these years, c they might a been harsh with him; but that 'ere pesky Lion– why, he'll eat more meat in a day than I kin in a week!"

"But, mother dear, you know Lion lives entirely on the scrap and bones nobody else can touch; and he's a great protection t the camp; and he pulled me out of the water once, when my hoo went flyin' over the bank, and I went flyin' after it; and yo know, mother, poor Ike never *could* git along without Lion."

"I know, I know," admitted Mrs. Armstrong, melting quit visibly, "but I might a had my chiny!"

"And you know, mother, the chiny could'nt have walked, or ridden a horse, or taken care of itself like Ike or Lion!"

"No, nor Ike and Lion would'nt a sold in Californy for more'n ten times what they cost down to Xenia."

"And did brave Lion really save your life?" asked Mary Anne with interest.

"I don't know that I can quite say that," answered Kitty, in genuously, "for it might be I shouldn't have been drowned with out him. All I knew was, that I went plump into the river where i was very deep, and I went down—down ever so far, until I wa quite sure I should never come up again. Then all at once seemed to touch bottom, it was all soft and oozy; and I though for a little I'd like to stay there, and stay I might for all I coul help myself. Then I thought I ought to try and cry out, and did try, but there seemed to be no noise—only a bubbling—an I felt I must die, for all my breath was gone. Just then a grea black thing came bump, bump, against me, for I could see a littl in the water—the difference between dark and light, anyhow– and I felt myself bein' dragged up, up, just as fast as before went down, and we came up to the top of the water with a grea jump, and I saw the green trees and the blue sky, and Ike, wit his red hair all on end, standin' close by in a punt, and Lion wit his great head next to mine, and then I fainted."

"Then he really did save you?"

"He ought to have the credit of it, anyhow; only as Ike wa close to us in a hay-field, and came right off when he heard th splash, and would have saved me, I take it, anyhow, I like t think they both had a hand in it."

"Poor Ichabod is clear-witted enough sometimes."

"Bless you, yes; about most everything, 'cept believin' he so dreadful rich, you know. He always thought that long befo we set out to go to California."

"*And you could* trust him—that is, with the house; for exam *ple, should you* wish to go abroad?"

"Oh, yes; and be safer than with some, for he'd neither pilfer nor yet drink whiskey. Jest look at him now. He's got Lion for a romp in the river; but he knows we're usin' it, so you see he goes down stream. I b'lieve Lion knows enough for that, as well as Ike, and there's many a Christian would know less."

During this little colloquy the two young women had, unconsciously, been serving as a target for the admiring glances of Luke Armstrong and Dick Railes, the former being absorbed in the contemplation of Mary Anne, and the latter no less interested in the animated Kitty. Dick was cleaning his rifle, or pretending to do so, and Luke performing the like office for a fowling-piece. Their attention, however, was suddenly distracted, as Kitty concluded her eulogy, by a quick exclamation from her companion, promptly repeated by the speaker.

"Why!" cried Kitty, "what's the matter with the dog?"

Lion had been actively engaged in bringing out sticks and other missiles, which Ike would cast for him into the water; but he had hastily loosed his hold of a huge branch he had been striving to drag from the bottom, and sprung up the bank on the opposite side of the stream. The dog was large—too large and too long-limbed to be a Newfoundland, although he was popularly reputed to be of that breed; and, as his huge framestood out against the sky, he looked of even gigantic proportions.

"Lion!" called Ike from his side of the stream. "What's got into the critter? Here, Lion, Lion!"

The dog did not turn, but, keeping his nose toward the mountains, gave a long, low whine.

"He's pintin' at something!" exclaimed Luke.

"It's a bar!" said Dick Railes, quietly loading his rifle.

"Ye don't s'pose there can be Injuns 'round, arter all?" asked Seth, in an undertone, as he came up anxiously.

"I don't b'lieve it; unless they might be a few scatterin' Utahs, and they wouldn't attack so many as we be."

"Dear me, father!" cried Mrs. Armstrong, looking with dismay on her scattered treasures, "if the savages come now, what will become of all the tea and sugar?"

"Don't be afeard, ma'am," said Dick; "the red skins don't kear a pine shavin' for them doin's; whiskey, and 'backy, and scalps, is what they travel fur!"

"Father!" questioned Kitty, fearfully, "do you see how Lion keeps on? What do *you* think's the trouble with him?"

"Why, nothin', Kitty, nothin'," replied Seth, cheerily; "leastways nothin' to hurt. An antelope, p'raps, in the cover yonder,

or a *coyote** in the brush on the hillside, or a little brown bar, maybe; but sartin nothin' to hurt."

Kitty looked pale, and mother, little reassured, made for the Castle, to hurry her handmaid, Bridget, who was peering open-mouthed from the wagon, and telling Mary Anne, who, with a quick presentiment, had made her way inside to help in a swift repacking: "Shure the baste was goin' on as if he had the divil (savin' your presence) foreninst him."

"Ye'd better git your shootin' irons ready, boys," said Nahum Pelter, coming up and joining the group who were discussing; "it mought be a grizzly, ye know, and I'll allow them bars is dreadful cantankerous if they're hungry and git riled."

"If it prove to be Indians——" began the doctor.

"Injuns!" laughed the frontiersman derisively; "ye won't ketch no Injuns comin' down on ye in a bee line with the wind, so that a dog with a dull nose like that kin tell ye on't a week beforehand. No; if it ain't game, nor yit no wild critter, it'll be more white folks travellin' like ourselves."

"Anyhow," said Luke Armstrong, "man or beast, we'd best be ready for 'em. Forewarned is forearmed, they say, and p'raps we owe Lion another good turn."

"Ay, ay," echoed the rest; "load up's the best word now, and find out what's in the wind arterwards."

Most of the party had taken advantage of the halt to clean or otherwise overhaul their firearms, so that they were now in good condition for service. For the next few moments little was heard but the snap of locks and rattle of ramrods thrusting home the bullets.

"Better git the women-folks all into the wagon, Luke," said Seth, breaking the silence. "Two or three on ye, git the cattle into the *corral*. Fust thing we know there'll be a stampede, maybe. Stop the dog's whinnyin', can't ye, Ike?" he continued, calling, though in a suppressed voice, to the latter.

Ike turned, and, without speaking, signed that the dog had made some discovery on the further side of the creek.

"Yes, yes, we know; but fetch him in; he can't tell us no more, and as like's not 'll pint us out to some one who don't yit know where we are."

The dog still stood on the rise of the bank, looming against the sky, and had repeated at intervals his warning whine. All at once he changed this note, however, and gave vent to a hoarse, threatening growl.

* The wild dog or wolf of the prairies.

"Fetch him in, Ike, fetch him in, quick, can't ye?" cried Luke, impatiently.

"Ye'd better," said Nahum Pelter, ominously, "or may be the stranger 'll git acquainted with him in a way ye won't like."

"What on airth is it, father?" queried Mrs. Armstrong, nervously, from her Castle. "Tell us the wust, whatever it is, and we'll stand by to help."

"We hain't seen ne'er a hide nor a hair," answered her husband; "but you can stand by, of course, if it's any comfort to ye. The two pieces are locked in the box that fits under my berth, and the bullets and powder, and the key is hangin' on a nail to the left hand side o' the winder; only load kearful, and don't use too much powder."

It had been agreed that, in the event of attack, the females should form a sort of reserve, loading weapons for the others, or using those in the wagon, according to the nature of the emergency. In pursuance of this plan they had undergone not a little preliminary practice, and were considered by the men at all events fit to be trusted with arms, however they might use them to advantage in a moment of peril. "That gal, Mary Anne," said the experienced Pelter, when revolving this scheme with the others, "that gal, Mary Anne, 'll stand fire; but whether the old woman and her darter will, ye can't tell till ye see 'em tried."

While the various preparations were progressing, Ichabod had been striving to induce the excited Lion to descend from his coigne of vantage, and return to his side; but the dog only replied to these requests by a deprecating shake of his tail, as if to say that Ike in his position was incapable of forming a just estimate of the exigencies of the case, and kept his ground. Now there is no doubt that Ike had greater confidence in Lion's sagacity than he had in that of any other individual of the party; he would unhesitatingly have deferred to his judgment in any affair wherein conflicting evidence brought about a diversity of opinions; but the gestures and exhortations of the party grew many and wrathful, and Ike, fearful of the consequences to his favorite, proceeded to wade across the stream to bring him in. The current was swift and deep, but there was a strong curve fifty yards below, where its bed widened and a bar formed which nearly met the side opposite that whence it sprung. Here the wagons had crossed, and here, by wading through about three feet of water, and taking a jump over a short space which intervened between the shoals, Ike managed to ford the stream. He soon reached the spot where Lion still kept up his growl, and seizing him by the collar dragged the unwilling

animal down the bank. Any other than Ike might have four this operation attended with some peril; but the dog, althoug sorely discontented, submitted to be led across the stream, ar finally made fast with the end of a lariat to one of the whee of the Castle.

"Poor old Lion," repeated Ike, while going through this u gracious task, "Poor old Lion! Tells 'em all about who's comin so they can git ready for bars or Injuns, and jest gits roped u for his pains! Knows more o' what's goin' on than any on 'e —long Pelter, or Dick Railes, or Jabe Fitch, or any out o' the hu lot; and they jest strut round all cock-a-hoop with their rifles an bowies, while poor old Lion's corded up like a break-jail! Nev mind, Lion, Ike 'll bring ye a good elk-bone, and ye can enjo yourself if ye *are* corralled." And suiting the action to the wor he sought out a great bone from some secret preserve, an straightway presented the peace-offering to the captive; but Lio gave a single grateful wag of his tail, and then, without touching th bone, concentrated his attention on the slope he had just quitte

"If it turns out to be a grizzly," observed Nahum Pelter, se tentiously, "and he pokes his snout over the rise, three on us ha better fire, and the others hold their loads."

"Right," said Seth; "he might take the creek in a hurr 'specially if not much hurt. Nahum, s'pose you, and Mr. Giffor and Jabe fire; you're all steady shots, and can reload as quick a any, and the rest on us kin stand by for squalls."

This plan being settled, two of the men were detailed to cros the stream, move down some distance, and "feel" in a manne the enemy's flank on the right, the water being so deep abov that nothing could pass it without swimming. These scout having received their instructions, were just on the point o starting, when a savage cry from Lion again fixed all eyes o the bank opposite. The tall figure of a man, by his dress an hue a genuine denizen of the forest, had suddenly appeared upo its summit. Quick as light the three rifles flew up to the shoulde and were levelled.

"Hold!" cried Seth Armstrong. "Don't shoot! We migh have a hull tribe about our ears afore the last o' the echoes!"

"Fact," assented Mr. Pelter, reluctantly dropping his piec "Better find how many there be in the flock, afore shooting th single bird."

"Ay, ay; don't fire. Shame to fire on a single man, ma be a friend; have a palaver fust," broke confusedly from th *various members* of the group, as the hostile weapons wer *lowered, and Ike* persuaded Lion into a temporary silence.

The Indian, for such he was, had remained motionless and impassive on the hillock; nor, while he saw the threatening muzzles of the rifles, did he change his attitude or his expression. He was of imposing stature, and, from the elevation of the ground where he stood, seemed to tower to a greater than human height. Indeed, what with his swarthy complexion, his air of command, and the suddenness of his appearance, there required no great effort of the imagination to conceive him the very genius of war, at whose beck might spring forth thousands of myrmidons to slay and to destroy.

When he saw, however, the rifles of the white men dropped from their shoulders, the Indian, with a gesture full of grace, took a crimson blanket from a sort of knapsack worn at his back, and holding it up with both hands at the two corners, shook it forth to the breeze, at the same time sweeping it downwards from above his head, as if to spread it on the ground.*

"The critter's friendly enough," exclaimed Dick Railes; "he wants to have a pow-wow."

"He ain't no Pawnee, nor yit no Ottoe, nor yit no Utah; he ain't like e'er an Injun we've seen so fur," remarked Nahum Pelter.

"Whatever he is, he means us no harm," said Hugh Gifford. "He clearly proposes a parley."

"There may be a lot more hard by," observed Seth, dubiously.

"Surely, if he has companions, and they intended mischief, an ambuscade, or a night attack, would be more promising than a demonstration like this," said Hugh. "Besides, as our friend here says, why come down on us with the wind?"

Thus reassured, Seth Armstrong laid down his rifle, and, advancing to the brink of the rivulet, with amicable signs beckoned the stranger to enter the camp. The latter shook his head courteously, and indicated that Seth's companions should likewise dispense with their arms. A consultation followed, which resulted in the men removing their rifles to a point at some little distance in their rear; Seth, however, taking the precaution to see that the two guns were properly loaded and ready in the Castle. Upon these concessions, the red man signified his willingness to confer with the party, and, having descended the bank and forded the stream, he advanced with dignity among them.

* A signal originating in the habit of spreading a robe or skin as a rest for guests to whom they wished to show distinguished courtesy: long practised as a sign of amity among most of the tribes westward of the Mississippi.

CHAPTER VI.

THE stranger looked of an uncertain age, for, while his face showed many marks of thought and exposure, his step was elastic as that of a youth. The features were prominent and aquiline, with the copper hue and high cheek bones common to his race. There was, however, so much intelligence in the face —so much shrewdness and perception mingled with a certain courtly reserve—that the first impression of the observer would certainly have been to count it as that of a civilized man. The second, indeed, would have made him doubt; for he would now perceive that inscrutable tawn in the swift flashing eye which always suggests the barbaric. Unlike those of most of the savages of the plains, his countenance seemed free from grease or paint; his head, however, was shaven, except the invariable scalp-lock, and from the ornamental circlet which surrounded it there sprung, behind, a towering eagle's plume.

He wore a hunting shirt of buckskin not unlike those of the white men, and leggings of the highly dressed skin of the antelope. The sides of the latter, like the belt and head-dress, were decorated with porcupine quills and beads. From the belt were suspended bags made of more delicately prepared skins, containing ammunition, and a formidable-looking hunting knife. The feet were protected by moccasins of deer-skin with thick elk soles, and the crimson blanket, before referred to, hung from the shoulders.

"My brothers do well," said the Indian, as he advanced into the expectant circle, "My brothers do well to be ready with their rifles, for there are many Ricarees and Ottoes on the war path, and the horse thieves are always watching their trail." He spoke in English, with a guttural but not unmusical accent, and with a wave of the hand, as if to spare his new friends the making apology for their somewhat hasty demonstration.

"You are not, then, of either of those tribes?" said Hugh Gifford, to whom Armstrong had signed to act as spokesman.

"Of no tribe which my brothers have seen. We are too few to spread far over the land like the Sioux and Blackfeet, and my brother's track lay too far to the south. There are nearly as many leagues between Washashaco and the wigwams of his people as stretch from here to the great Lake of Bitter Waters."

"Are you alone?"

There must have been a shade of anxiety in Gifford's manner which caused the slightest possible trace of amusement in that of the Indian, as he replied, "Not alone; but the braves of Washashaco are fewer than those of my brother."

"Will you bring your braves to our camp that they may also smoke a pipe with us?"

"They are a day's journey distant. They are watching the beavers, who are very cunning. Washashaco watches here. By-and-by we shall return to our homes laden with much spoil."

"But this is the country of the Utahs; have you no fear of their enmity?"

A haughty smile passed over the chief's swarthy countenance. "The Utahs are women. Shall we, who make dogs of the Pawnees and running hares of the Ottoes, swerve from our path for the Utahs? Besides, these Indians fight only with tomahawks and poisoned arrows; our great Father has taken our lands, it is true, but he has given us arms which are very long. The French and Yengeese traders from the big Lakes take rich skins from the red men, and give them short guns fit only for firewood; the people of my brother take most of our hunting grounds, but they give us long rifles, the better to hunt on those that are left."

His hearers looked instinctively for the Indian's arms.

"Washashaco's hands are empty. He knew his white brothers would not love him better for seeing his rifle. He therefore left it with his horse in the thicket."

"Let him bring his horse and his arms into our camp. Let him partake of our meat and smoke of our pipe, that he may rest and refresh himself before he goes further on his way."

The Indian bowed with simple courtesy. "Washashaco will do so," he said, and turning on his heel he recrossed the stream to carry the invitation of Gifford into effect.

Hasty and many were the suggestions and observations which followed his departure.

"Can we trust him, d'ye think?" asked Seth, anxiously.

"I see his camp fire afore," said Dick Railes, "but thought it mought be Luke's or some of Ike's doin's."

"There may be others," surmised the Doctor, "on the other sides of us. To conceal their number and make sure of ours, this one may have come singly to lull us into security while the rest hem us securely in."

"Ye'd better git out the th'odolite, Doctor," suggested Dick with irony, "and find out how many there be."

"The man strikes me as honest," said Gifford, replying to Seth, "but be that as it may, to give him a meal and an ounce of tobacco can do no harm. If he means mischief he can work it as well without as with them."

"And then ag'in there's a good many of us," mused Seth. "Injuns don't admire so many long range rifles; and we're twelve able-bodied men, to say nuthin' of Ike and Lion."

"'Twont do to set too much store on numbers," warned Dick Railes, who had considerable doubts as to the fighting capacity of the Eastern men, or the "Yanks," as he styled them, and, if the truth must be told, more contempt for that of Hugh Gifford than for those of any of the others; for was he not a bookworm, a scholard, a lawyer,—all inconsistent with any probable success in arms? "Numbers is sometimes more hurt than good. They stirs up panic, numbers does; they lose their grip when fightin' time comes; ye can't be sure of e'er a man that hain't smelt powder."

"Come, come, Dick, don't skear us to death aforehand. I guess the funkiest of us 'ud rather fight than lose a scalp without it, and that's about what it comes to if we're attacked."

"There's more danger of their starvin' ye to death," remarked Jabe Fitch, "at least so I've heerd. If ye meet 'em when they've been a long time without game, as they'll often be on the plains, they'll jest belt your grub anyway, if they don't your scalps; and we've a long way to travel yit."

"That's like Jabe, that is," laughed Dick. "He kears more for his belly than he does for his scalp, any day!"

"And why shouldn't I?" put Jabe, stoutly. "Ye can live without the one, and it's sartin ye can't without the other."

"All things considered," said the doctor, "it may be as well to look sharp for both. But I agree with Gifford in thinking there's no harm in this man. The signs are much at fault if he's a bad specimen of his race."

"Signs don't go fur with Injuns," said the censorious Dick. "They're wuss than the old sarpint himself in not lettin' on what they mean to do."

"Any how," pursued Seth, "we'll be ready whatever happens. We'll hev' a double watch all the time, and keep an extra eye on the cattle, and be ready to move at any minute. If the wust comes to the wust, we ain't the only ones who've ever crossed the plains, nor the only ones who've had to fight their way through."

"Fight!" chimed in Nahum Pelter, with his deep bass voice; "*there won't be no fight!*"

"Why won't there?"

"There won't be no fight—not with that man or his warriors—leastways, not if he says there won't."

"And why not, I asked ye?" pressed Seth.

"Because he won't lie—he's a Delaware!"

"A Delaware!" exclaimed Hugh Gifford, "and in these western wilds!"

"Ay; Uncle Sam gave 'em hunting grounds out in West Kansas. They'd changed and changed as the years rolled on, and the country got thicker settled, and the Injuns couldn't live near the whites, so at last they've got 'em clear into Kansas, what there is left of 'em."

"And you think this is one of the tribe?"

"I'm sure on't; I knowed at first he weren't neither Pawnee, nor Creek, nor Sioux, nor Ottoe; but I didn't see the signs that told me what he was. I've known Delawares since I was knee high, and I never heerd o' their breaking their words."

"But what, think you, is the cause of his being so far from his hunting-grounds?"

"That *is* puzzlin'; it can't be for huntin', it's no use to come so fur; it can't be for tradin', there's nothin' to trade, and nobody to trade with. I take it there's only one thing else, and that is that he's on the war path."

"But you don't think he means harm to ourselves; and who else is there to fight?"

"True enough, who?" repeated Seth. "He's the first redskin we've seen for a fortnit."

"The country mought swarm with 'em," answered the Illinoisian, "and we not see one. There'd be two hostile parties, maybe, each trying to circumvent the other, travellin' only at night, lurkin' in the valleys and gulches by day, or dodgin' and crawlin' on their bellies among the brush, weeks and weeks afore a war cry's heard or a scalp took. We not seein' 'em's no sure thing they ain't thar."

"It seems prudent, Mr. Armstrong," said Gifford, "to accept this Indian's presence as the evidence of others besides his own party being near. It may be as well to take it for granted, and to act as if we were sure of it."

"Them's my idees," corroborated Mr. Pelter. "But here comes the chief back again. P'raps he'll let on what he's up to himself—most likely, if no one asks him 'bout it."

The warrior now returned, this time bestriding a powerful mare, and carrying *a formidable rifle*. Luke Armstrong took

charge of the former, notwithstanding her owner's courteous deprecation of the service, and Lion was soon reconciled to the unfamiliar presence on seeing its amicable relations with his friends. Washashaco readily partook of the refreshment offered him, and the whole party, with a mingling of curiosity, policy, and a large proportion of genuine kindness, vied with each other in offering him attentions. Mrs. Armstrong was, perhaps, an exception, for nothing could induce her to regard an Indian otherwise than with aversion and distrust. "They ain't Christians," she declared; "and it's agin Scripture to put your faith in the heathen. Lion knew the Evil One was about somewheres. Jest as like 's not he'll cut all our throats in the night, and lug off our scalps afore breakfast."

"Dear Mrs. Armstrong," argued Mary Anne, "I've always heard that the Delawares were a noble race, and most wandering tribes, they say, will always respect your confidence, if they have broken bread and eaten salt with you."

"They tell that about the Arabs, I know," conceded the good lady; "but they're half Christians; they ain't like these 'ere painted devils, who go round howlin' and scalpin' folks."

"You've no call to be the least afeerd, Miss Kitty," said Dick Railes, who always availed of any excuse to get near that blooming damsel; "he's quite safe, and we're goin' to keep double watch to-night."

"Law, Richard, I'm not afraid," replied Kitty, saucily; "and if twelve men are not enough for one Indian, I'm sure four women would be."

"And what do *you* think of this chieftain?" Mary Anne asked of Hugh Gifford.

"Think? Why, that it would be more dangerous to appear to doubt than to trust him."

Washashaco said nothing of his objects, or those of his braves, during the day; and although the principal and most responsible members of the party were naturally anxious on the subject, they yet prudently forbore to question him. The Indian's eye roved unceasingly over their camp, their equipage, their cattle, and their arms; but otherwise he expressed neither curiosity nor surprise. Once, indeed, when Seth opened the rearward entrance to Castle Armstrong, and showed him its singular interior, he uttered a characteristic "Ugh;" but this might have been elicited by satisfaction with the very obvious disgust of Mrs. Armstrong at the procedure, rather than by admiration of what he saw besides. During the day he preserved his silence, but at night, when all were assembled around the camp fire,

nd the females had retired, he expressed a desire to address is friends on a topic of common interest. The night was ooler than usual, and the wind hurtled mournfully through the ottonwoods and willows which stood on the banks of the tream. The camp fire was, therefore, made large and ruddy, nd it cast a far-reaching glow over the picturesque scene which urrounded it. Pipes and whiskey had been produced; but alhough the Indian used the tobacco freely, he declined to touch he stimulant which has been the curse of so many of his race. Tho men mostly lay stretched on their robes and blankets in various attitudes of careless ease, for four of their number were circling the camp in vigilant patrol, and they were free to smoke in quiet. Seth Armstrong sat on one side, with Doctor Landale and Hugh Gifford supporting him on either hand; the Indian seeming to regard the two, in their capacities of medicine-man and spokesman, as somewhat elevated above the rest of the party. Washashaco, in dignified isolation, sat apart a short distance upon his crimson blanket. Not far off were Ichabod and Lion, both grave and attentive watchers of the proceedings. What with the long beards and gleaming eyes, the picturesque costumes, the bits of bright color thrown out here and there by the dancing flames, and the intense solitude of the scene far around it, the group would have appeared to a spectator, to use the hackneyism, well worthy a painter's pencil.

There had been a long pause, purposely unbroken by his hosts, when the chief rose to his feet and spoke:

"My brothers have heard of the tribe of the Delawares. They were once very many and very strong. They are now very few, but still strong, and will be so until the last of the Lenni Lenape shall join his fathers in the happy hunting-grounds. Their braves were once counted by tens of thousands, and there are now only a few poor hundreds; but the hundreds who remain are mighty warriors, and their deeds are not less brave than the deeds of those who have gone before.

"My brothers have heard how their fathers deprived the Delawares of their lands; it is an old story, and it cannot be pleasant to my brothers' ears. It cannot be pleasant to be told that their fathers did wrong, therefore I will not repeat it. I will only say that the Delawares came from the banks of the Ohio as their fathers came from those of the Susquehanna; and that they came from the banks of the Mississippi as they came from the banks of the Ohio. The remnant of my tribe are now far from the mighty river, where they were told they should live for ever. They are now in the west-

ern plains of Kansas. If the Delawares were as numerous they were when they first left the valley of the Susquehan they would be pushed on, and pushed on, until they were push at sunset into the great lake of bitter waters. But they are fe and their last warriors will be dead and forgotten before they c be driven to the great mountains.

"Old men say that one wrong brings on another; and it so with red men as well as white ones. The white men thr the Delawares from their hunting-grounds, and the Delawar have been forced to thrust the Pawnees and Sioux from thei The Pawnees did not like to see the Delawares come into t land that had always been theirs. This was to be expecte They fight all the time; but the Delawares are better warrio and kill far more braves than they lose. Still, they lose man and grow fewer and fewer every year. This is a pity; but th cannot now, even if they would, return to the lands they ha left behind. They will, therefore, remain, and die fighting.

"Three moons ago, a strong band of Pawnees made a attack upon one of our villages. It was at night, and mo of the young men were absent hunting. The Pawnees burn the village, and killed some old women. They also drove o some cattle. They were pursued, and divided into seve parties. Washashaco, and the braves under his comman chased the party which was led by their principal chief. Aft a little, the Pawnees discovered your train, and resolved attack it. They did not do so because you were then near t Forts, and they were afraid. They followed, determined surprise you after you should cross the mountains, and so far distant from the soldiers of your great father. I and n braves have followed them cautiously, knowing every step th have taken. They think the Delawares have returned to th camp. Four days ago they were short of food, and they sto ped to hunt. I hastened on, and gained some distance, leavi my braves to watch their course. The Pawnees will soon atta the camp of my brothers; but Washashaco and his young m will help them to fight."

The address of the chief had been thus far received in u broken silence; but when it arrived at this startling pe ration, a hum of anxiety and exclamation ran round the circ Seth raised his hand, imposing continued silence; and Giffo rose.

"We have listened," he said, "with interest and attention, a we hope we shall be good friends both with Washashaco and l warriors. But why is it—since the Delawares have been injur

by the white men—why is it that they should offer to assist white men against their enemies?"

"Because," answered the chief, gravely, "because the Delawares are at peace with the white men, and at war with their red enemies; because the Delawares and my brothers together can fight the Pawnees, but would not be strong enough to fight them singly, for they are many; and because, though there are some Delawares who do not like white men, there are no Delawares but who hate Pawnees. Is my brother answered?"

Gifford bowed assent, and continued, "What, then, is the number of the Pawnees?"

"When we first struck their trail," said Washashaco, "they counted over three score; but some have left them by the way."

"Three score!" exclaimed Nahum Pelter, with a dismayed whistle; "that's five to one, I reckon."

"My big brother forgets the braves of Washashaco."

"And how many are they?"

"There are nine besides Washashaco."

"Chief!" said Seth, anxiously, "how do ye know where the Pawnees air now? How do ye know but they might come upon us at any moment; p'raps this very night?"

"Because, had they been near enough to strike, the Delawares would have been here to warn their chief long before the sun went to sleep."

"But were your people to approach this neighborhood," said Gifford, "how are they to discover you? Our sentinels are wary, and should the Delawares approach the camp, may mistake them for enemies."

"My braves are not geese," replied the warrior, "and they know that my white brothers are here. When they arrive they will be half a day's journey in advance of the Pawnees, for they are well mounted, and know where to come. They will seek Washashaco in a spot where he has lately been. They will find that he is in safety and close at hand. Had any accident befallen him, they would know that, too. Should they come by night or by day, Washashaco will know it; and they will not enter your camp until they are invited by their white brothers."

The party were fain to rest content with these assurances, although it became evident to the boldest that their situation was a critical one. If the chief's statements and opinions could be implicitly relied upon, the chance for protecting their lives and property was by no means too good; while, if he were playing them false, it must be with a design whose fruition was likely to be yet more fatal to their security. The latter theory, however,

none were ready to maintain; the opinion, that it would be well to keep a close watch upon Washashaco, constituting its strongest expression. As for the chief himself, having said what he came to say, he had folded himself in his blanket, and quietly gone to sleep by the camp fire. Most of the others were wakeful, naturally enough, and remained a long time in anxious and thoughtful counsel. Ike and Lion lay down trustingly together next to the red man, and dropped into their customary slumbers; but it was long before their comrades desisted from their whispered consultations, and the small hours were creeping on ere the little camp was once more buried in repose.

CHAPTER VII.

The sweet air of the morning was just stealing over the earth when Mary Anne left her couch; and the rosy fingers of Aurora had not quite swept away the deep and tender blue which still lingered in the west. The girl stole down to the tiny beach of yellow sand which margined the rippling stream to get water for her morning ablutions. She glanced as she went toward the camp fire; it was burning yet, or rather smouldering in its tumbling debris of white ashes, and the robe-wrapped figures huddled about it were motionless in slumber. By the ford lower down the stream, she saw a figure leaning statue-like against a tree. His rifle was clasped in the arms folded across his chest, while the breech rested on the ground. The head of the sentinel drooped forward heavily, and he, too, seemed fast asleep. It was very, very still, but, as always happens, it seemed more silent because there were certain sounds to remind one of the absence of others. Such were the deep breathing of the sleepers, the gentle swirling of the stream, and the confused trilling of some early birds.

The girl completed her toilet undisturbed. She arranged some details of her dress, and bound into a simple knot the great masses of black hair which had previously fallen below her waist. Close by was a smooth pool, caused by an accidental eddy, and darkened by a little shrubbery beside it. Into this, with a natural impulse, she looked, as she adjusted her tresses, as if to mark the final effect,

"But that Miss Armstrong is so free from vanity," said a low

voice behind her, "one might think her in danger of the fate of Narcissus."

She was called Miss Armstrong by the party, just as the young lady to whom that designation belonged was universally known as Kitty; and Hugh Gifford, finding she did not object, so styled her. She looked up with a quick blush.

"Mr. Gifford is not often lavish of even implied compliments; but, since he has grown classical and speaks of fate, he shouldn't forget that of Actæon."

"Indeed, I only came as the *coiffure* approached its conclusion—an offence not punishable, I hope, even in the eyes of the most severe of Dianas. What a lovely morning! and how calm and peaceful everything appears. Thank Heaven, we are all safe thus far!"

"You think we are in danger, then?"

"You know nothing of what passed last night?"

"I do. Kitty and I were uneasy after the arrival of the Indian. We yielded to the natural propensity of our sex, and listened from the wagon. Poor child! She was in mortal terror."

"And you?"

"I? I accustomed myself to the idea that danger was inevitable in crossing the plains. I ran some risks to enable myself to do so. I have lately endured a great, a desolating affliction. Perhaps, therefore, I am not so appalled at the chance of peril."

"I really apprehend that chance is serious. The men will fight well, if need be, without doubt. But I fear we may be assailed by overwhelming numbers."

"Why not fly, push on as fast as possible, and so escape?"

"Impossible. These heavy wagons could never keep ahead of the horses of our pursuers; and to abandon them is to risk starvation. Besides, the chief would be dissatisfied by such an attempt, even if he did not essay forcibly to oppose it."

"Why should he do so?"

"He thinks of nothing but glory. Why should he be here? Why acquaint us with the designs of our enemies? Simply because he hopes to win a triumph over them, and carry back their scalps to the lodges of his people. He would not regard with favor any policy on our part which would render an encounter less probable."

"But is he sanguine of success?"

"He counts upon it as certain."

"And what if it should be otherwise?"

"You mean should we be overcome?"

"Yes."

"The men would probably all be killed; the women carried into captivity."

"That I for one would not be. Still you do not think our case really desperate?"

"By no means. We have many advantages of position. This stream covers us pretty effectually on nearly three sides. We can barricade the fourth so as to obtain all the advantage of a fortified position. As to provisions and water, we are abundantly supplied; so that, if the enemy attempt a siege, we need not dread it. Meantime, there is always a hope that some other and more numerous party of our own race may chance this way and reinforce us."

He spoke lightly, but there was a gravity in his eye, and the habitual compression of the lips was slightly increased. Mary Anne went on as though answering what she saw in his thoughts rather than what fell from his mouth.

"I don't know that I should fear to die," she said, musingly, "or much regret it. True, I had hoped to be of some small use in the world. What they taught me might be useless for myself, considering what my future station is likely to be. But all these busy ones thronging to the land of gold—they must have children, and I could teach them, and so be not altogether a useless clod—a cumberer of the earth!"

She had spoken of this scheme before, and Hugh, seeing it was a somewhat cherished one, had applauded it as an honorable and useful career for her to adopt. But he had thought before, and he thought now, as he gazed on the girl's striking face, and remembered her many attractions, that, in a land where women are few, such an one would find plenty to dissuade her from the arduous toils of a school teacher.

"What is life," continued Mary Anne, with more bitterness than was usual with her, "what is life, when one has nothing to make life dear? The home, the cherished scenes, the faithful friends, and more, far more than all, the adored father—gone, all gone, and for ever. Why should I wish to live, without father, without home, without friends?"

"Do not say without friends," interrupted Gifford, gently. "I am sure this worthy family are your good friends, and Kitty dearly loves you. Do not say without friends; for I—I—if you will let me call myself so, I will always be a friend to you."

"You will?"

"I will."

"You promise it, then?"

"Faithfully."

"I shall remember, and perhaps call upon you some time to remember."

"Now, and always. And for now, since it is one of a friend's offices to tell truths, let me offer you one. A woman with youth and beauty—I do not flatter, recollect, for I am only a friend—with youth and beauty such as yours should despair of nothing. The loss of friends, indeed, she may deplore, for it is irreparable. But there is nothing else, no other loss but it can be supplied, and more. Youth, health, loveliness—they can compass anything!"

"Anything?"

"Why not? They can procure fortune."

"Dross!"

"Ah! you have never wanted it. Fame——"

"That is more valuable."

"Love——"

"Love!" she exclaimed, as the color rose in her pure olive cheek—"Love! No! They cannot procure love!"

"Believe me, they can. More surely than all else beside."

"Are you sure of it?" she asked, archly, and turning her lustrous black eyes full on his face, "With your particular experience, do you feel so sure?"

Gifford colored in turn. "You know exceptions are admitted to prove general rules. But my argument is that you have everything to hope—a bright, a cherished, a courted future! Contrast your case with mine. I see nothing before me but a long, miserable struggle with poverty, before which I may succumb at last."

"You have also youth; you have talents, ambition."

"The first and last, perhaps; but, unlike you, I have no happy past to recur to, to show me that life may sometimes be bright and beautiful. The vista behind is grim, cheerless, and desolate, and I have no right to assume that it will be different with me in the future. My life has been all bitterness. I have partaken unwillingly of the bitter cup of the Puritans, who settled in the rocky land that bore me. The draught has been flavored with all of asceticism, intolerance, hardship, they ever knew or I most loathe, without the enthusiasm which enabled them to drain it to the dregs, or the perversity which enabled them to call it nectar. I have no friends whom I can esteem; there are none who love me."

"None who love you! You forget Virginia!"

She was quite right; more than once in this conversation had Hugh forgotten Virginia; but the reproach, while he felt it to be just, nettled him at the moment, and he said, hastily:

"Were I to tell her as much as I have now told you, she would think me as crazy as poor Ike there; and so I should be to tell it with the hope of sympathy."

"Then why—" The girl reddened, stammered, and paused. It was doubtful whether she felt more of relief or annoyance when the cheery call of Kitty Armstrong came to her aid by summoning her to the inside of the castle. However, she flew to respond to it, and left Gifford standing absorbed in thought upon the strand.

Looking up, he saw in the act of crossing from the opposite bank the tall figure of the chieftain, who had evidently forestalled his hosts, early as their rising had been.

"Washashaco is up before the sun," said Gifford, as he saluted him. "Has he seen anything of interest this morning?"

There was the slightest smile of polite irony on the Indian's face, as he replied:

"I saw the White Fawn talking with my brother, and I saw her run away into the moving wigwam."

"Has the chief any tidings of his braves?"

"None. The Pawnees are bad hunters as well as bad warriors, and they have found no deer. Or they have fallen in with another party of their tribe, and will come in greater numbers."

"Should they do so, our chance to resist them will be but small."

"They are dogs. Great in feasting; great when their young men drag at their heels the skin of the polecat; great in becoming hogs when they get at the white man's fire-water; but small on the war-path, and like children when they encounter the Delawares."

"The Delawares are valiant, and their white friends will fight hard; but can they hope to do wonders? Can they make one rifle equal to ten?"

"Is my brother afraid?"

A hot flush rose to Gifford's brow, but he restrained his anger, and answered gently, "He has not yet been in battle, and perhaps makes the danger greater than it is. Most of his people think they can conquer against five times their number of Indians."

"The white men have better guns, and the red men have more cunning. But this place can be made strong, like the forts of the soldiers at Leavenworth. Very few can hold it against very many."

The sleepers by this time were awake and stirring, and Ichabod, having approached the spot where the chief and Gifford stood, thought this a favorable moment to join in their deliberations.

"Ike kin hold it alone," he remarked, gravely; "Ike and Lion. We kin hold it agin all the red-skins 'twixt here and the Mississippi. There ain't ne'er an Injun 'ud dare fire a gun if they knew Ike was anywheres 'round. He can do all the fightin' and all the gold-findin', he kin; only he won't tell ye 'bout the gold, cause it's bad for ye. Small good in gittin' things for nuthin'. Lion works for his dinner, and gits a good appetite."

He was a strange figure enough, with his shock of red hair; his cap of bearskin, with its extravagantly long plumes; his hunting-shirt, with its grotesque ornaments of beads and feathers, and bits of fur; his assured speech, and his ungainly action. But the Indian regarded him with a countenance as immovable as stone.

"P'raps ye'd like some gold, chief? P'raps *you'd* like to cook your elk in a gold pot, and wear a crown from now to never. Ike knows where it is—more 'n they ever found in Mexico, or Golcondy, or Peroo! More 'n they ever piled inter the mint at Philadelfy! Acres of it—mountains of it—so ye kin have yer wigwams, and yer canoes, and yer tomahawks, and yer huntin' knives, all of bright, pure, beautiful, yaller gold."

"My brother is laughing," said Washashaco, sententiously.

"D'ye know what we're goin' to do? We're goin' to sail in bime by, and jest take the hull continent, and drive out the Britishers, and the Rooshians, and the red-skins, and the greasers, and annex Canady, and gobble up Cuby, and clean out the hull lot of 'em! That's what we're goin' to do. And every man shall have two farms, and live on milk, and honey, and elk-meat, and hoe-cake, and never do any work 'cept when he goes to Congress! And Ike's to be the President one week, turn about, and Lion another! Hooray! for Ike the Fust, and the 'Murikun eagle!' Hooray!"

And he began his strange performance of capering and leaping about, and covering himself with his buffalo robe, at which Lion, as usual, assumed that he was a bear, and attacked him furiously accordingly. The Indian looked at him steadfastly for a space, and then a light crept over his bronzed and haughty features.

"My brother is possessed of the Great Spirit," he said, rev-

erently, "and no red man would do him harm; but they might not always respect his friends."

The camp was now all bustle and activity. The females were preparing the morning meal, and the men were hard at work moving the wagons into a position which would cause them, so far as they could extend, to describe a chord of the arc formed by the little stream. On the right, with its back to the river, was the *corral* where the cattle were placed; a situation more secure than that on the left, where lay the ford. It was believed that no enemy would risk an attack on the water-side, thus giving the greatest possible advantages to the defence, and it therefore seemed prudent to strengthen the open or land approach as much as possible. The soil was extremely hard and stony, and the attempt to throw up a breastwork of earth would, it was judged, be impracticable, or, if practicable, involve too much exhausting labor; and it was expedient to keep their small number as fresh and unexhausted as safety would permit.

On a small knoll which separated the *corral* from the space forming the immediate camp, stood a copse of timber, almost the only wood of any moment in sight. There was, it is true, a thin fringe of cottonwoods scattered along the banks of the rivulet; but they were few and sparse, and afforded little cover. The copse in question, however, chiefly consisting of hard, gnarly mahogany of the scrub description found in this region, was so close and thick as to afford considerable protection. Here, after careful consultation, Castle Armstrong was now planted, to serve as a refuge for the women, and, indeed, as a kind of citadel to the fortress.

Seth Armstrong, having slept on the intelligence received the night before, was possessed, in the morning, with the idea that the intervention of poor Ichabod might be made as useful in the event of an attack from the Pawnees as it had been on a previous occasion; but Washashaco, now apprised of the latter incident, and having seen the hero of it, shook his head, on its being suggested that such a result might again be hoped for. The Pawnees, he represented, would in all probability attempt a surprise; in such a case, how should they know or care that any one possessed of the Great Spirit had made the party contraband of war? In such a tone, if not in such precise terms, he opposed any reliance on Ike's mediation. The truth was, the warrior desired no other result than that the issue should be squarely fought out to what he regarded as its legitimate conclusion, and used every argument his eloquence could sug-

est against flight, diplomacy, strategy, or any other ignoble ubstitute for battle.

Preparations for hostilities were, therefore, pushed with the ıtmost speed; preparations intelligible enough to all the assem- ›ly save poor Mrs. Armstrong, who looked on them with a lubiousness which, as they progressed, gave place to terror. Her appeals to the two young women failing to elicit satisfac- ;ory replies, she had recourse to Luke. "What on airth is the matter, Luke? I knew that dreffful heathen was come for no good; but do they really expect we shall git attackted? Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! nothin' never did come but harm from havin' to do with the Evil One! What *will* they do with us if they take us all prisoners? And these 'ere poor gals, too! Arter all, it's lucky I didn't bring my chiny!"

Luke reassured his mother as well as he could; there was by no means a certainty of their being attacked—only a chance; but it was well to be ready for anything. The chief was very friendly, and had come to warn and not to harm them; moreover, he had others of his tribe near at hand, who, in case of need, would fly to their assistance. These assurances were received with obstinate incredulity; so Mary Anne, who had been followed everywhere during the explanation by Luke's admiring eyes, relieved herself and him by coming to his support.

Meanwhile, sturdy Doctor Landale was getting ready lint and bandages with the same equanimity that marked his daily observations. "You'd better learn how to apply a tourniquet," he remarked to Hugh Gifford, "in case I happen to get hit. These Western men have remedies of their own for most simple hurts, but they've nothing to substitute for that." And Hugh did learn it as well as was possible in the hour which elapsed before breakfast. When that hour arrived, the dispositions for defending the camp were tolerably complete. Washashaco, truly, had some suggestions to make, but it would answer, he said, if they were carried into effect after the meal. The sentries were now called in, to be replaced as quickly as possible by others.

"All here," said Seth Armstrong, "all here, and, thank God, all safe!" as the different members of the little company came flocking in toward the kettles. The worthy man paused a little, meaning to say a word or two in more formal recognition of the mercies they enjoyed, and a strange murmur arose among the assemblage. "All here," somebody repeated. "Not all, I reckon, unless twelve's the same as thirteen!" And, "Who is it, who is it?" ran from one to the other, as each looked at and counted his neighbors. It was one of the young

Irishmen, one of the laborers whom Seth had engaged at St. Louis.

"Why," cried Luke, "Dennis was placed sentry at two o'clock at the ford!"

"So he was," exclaimed Gifford, "and he was there, safe enough, at daybreak, for I saw him. I do believe," he continued, as his thoughts flew back over the time, "I do believe the fellow was asleep, though!"

"Asleep!" repeated Seth; "then like enough he's asleep still. That won't do!"

"Do," cried Dick Railes, "I should think not; if men's goin' to sleep on watch, with the country swarmin' with red-skins, we'll git shot off like so many woodchucks!"

"Come," said Gifford, rising, "let's hear what he's got to say; perhaps the poor fellow's unwell."

"Ay, ay," echoed Seth, kindly, "we'll go and see what he says for himself."

The men started for the ford; only a short twenty rods to go. The sentinel was still there; still leaning against the tree, with his arms folded across his breast, and the clasped rifle resting on the ground.

"Dennis!" cried Luke, as they approached. There was no reply, and the party quickened their steps until they stood by the man's side. He was lashed to the tree by a cord passing around the waist; a knife was buried to the hilt in his side, and the man was dead—stone dead.

All gazed for a moment in silent horror; then a shout went up:

"Washashaco! The Chief! The Indian! Where is he?"

But the Delaware had vanished, and was nowhere to be found.

CHAPTER VIII.

The day was passed by the wayfarers in gloom and anxiety. It was evident that they were surrounded by unseen enemies, and where the stroke would fall next none could tell. The sudden disappearance of the Delaware naturally led to the belief that he was knowing to the assassination of the unfortunate sentry, if, indeed, he was not himself the actual murderer. But, if so, why should he have come into their midst to warn them of coming

danger? And if such a course had been adopted with the sinister design alone of learning their numbers and means of defence, why, after obtaining that knowledge, should he have returned, thus incurring the risk of being set face to face with the corpse of Dennis, and being charged with his murder? The latter objection was most conclusive to Hugh Gifford, as opposed to the hypothesis of the Indian's guilt; for he remembered his conversation with him in the morning, which took place within easy hail of the spot where Dennis stood, and when there was each moment the greatest probability of the deed being detected. Certainly it seemed strange that Washashaco should have made his way across the ford in the morning unchallenged by Dennis, who stood close by it; but might not the deed have been wrought as probably before the chief set out as afterwards, and might not the apathy of the sentry be thus accounted for? On the other hand, if Washashaco were innocent, why should he throw a cloud over his conduct, by absconding without a word of explanation at the critical moment of discovery?

These were doubts and fears not easy to be resolved, and the more they were canvassed the more threatening the prospect appeared for the future. Upon one point all were agreed, which was that they must henceforth practise redoubled vigilance, and leave no precaution unemployed which might avert the further reduction of their scanty numbers. To this end they determined that it would be imprudent to send out scouts, and that, should they remain unmolested throughout the day, the most intelligent and wary of the party should serve that night as sentinels. For it was remarkable that no one could be found who had heard the slightest noise during the night before. Not a growl from Lion, usually so watchful, not the rustle of a leaf had served as a warning sign or had betrayed the stealthy foot of the assassin. They must, therefore, watch to-night with increased wariness if they would not share the fate of their luckless companion.

"As to gittin' shot in a fair fight," growled Nahum Pelter in his deep bass voice, "every man expects it, I reckon, and jest travels on his chances. But this here skewerin' of ye onawares in the dark rakes me down altogether. It ain't my style, that ain't. I don't s'pose the poor Paddy was good for much," he continued, chewing ponderously, and ejecting regretful spirts of tobacco-juice. "I don't s'pose the poor cuss had much grit in him for a bush fight; but I'm sorry for him, I am; and a rifle less is a rifle less when we come to the scratch."

Dr. Landale, who was gliding about sounding the spirit and temper of the men just as he would feel their pulses, questioned

Pelter as to how he thought, in the event of a fight, the men would behave.

"Think they'll fight? Wall, I reckon all the Westerners will. They're born fighters, they are. I don't feel so stiff about the Yanks; there's two kinds o' Yanks, wooden nutmeg Yanks, and book-learnin' ones; I don't think there's much fight in neither of 'em. Still they may do well enough behind the wagons; and ef they don't run at the fust fire they'll be apt to be darned obstinate arterwards. But the Western boys there, Luke and Dick in pettikilar, they'll fight like h——, they will. And I calkilate I'm good for about ten Injins, I am: that's so."

With which comfortable assurance the giant launched forth a fresh cataract of saliva, and stalked away to prepare his armament. Hugh Gifford was more generous in his estimate of Nahum's prowess.

"These Western countrymen of yours brag so consumedly,' observed the doctor, "that by all accepted rules of probability and precedent they should prove feeble if not cowardly in action."

"I firmly believe they will do all that men can do," answered Hugh, "if not all that they promise. This inflated talk is a mere matter of habit, and no true test of the nature of the man. Braggarts are often brave men on this side the water, as, I fancy, cowcombs often are on the other. But I believe there are no people about whom old-fashioned saws and accepted axioms are more frequently falsified than the Americans."

"Humph," grumbled the doctor; "that means, I suppose, that they are of stuff so different from ordinary mortals that they are not to be judged by the laws which history and experience have established—a modern chosen people made to order, who are to have new codes for social organization, new philosophies for intellectual development, because the humdrum affairs which have taken some thousands of years to grow are not good enough for their purpose, eh?"

"No," said Hugh, smiling, "only that the conditions which surround them—intellectual and physical—are so very different from those of any people of whom we have any authentic record, that we must not expect their progress or achievements to precisely square with those of any people whose histories we possess."

"We're like to hev a hard time on't, gentlemen," said Seth, coming up. "I did hope to git across all safe and sound when we'd come so far as the mountains; but we've had an uncommon easy journey, and I suppose it weren't in the nature of things that the path should be allers smooth. This poor lad who's gone

may be's only a day before all the rest on us; but we must try and do our dooty like men. I shouldn't kear so much," he added in a lower tone, "if it weren't for the women folks. It hurts me pooty bad to see mother goin' on as she is now—and them two poor gals ain't fit either to die or to fall into the hands of them devils of Injuns. Howsumever, please God, they shan't if we can help it."

"Amen," said Hugh and the doctor, while Seth passed on, busy as he was in planning and arranging to make the stronghold as secure as possible. The others stood for a moment in silence, when the doctor spoke: "The good man doesn't see that the presence of the women makes his camp twice as strong as it would otherwise be. What think you?"

"I? I am sure of it."

"I suppose," continued the doctor, "that there's no great chance of availing ourselves of poor Ichabod's misfortune?"

"I fear not; for whether he plays us true or false, the chief's argument on that subject seems unanswerable. The Pawnees will, without doubt, attempt a surprise, and, in that case, it matters little whether he be with us or not, except that he knows how to pull a trigger. But come, we should do our share toward the fortifications."

The two men then followed Seth to the line of the wagons, which were now connected, after a fashion, by a hasty *abattis* made of such rough brush and bits of timber as the men had been able to collect, and strengthened by ox chains interlaced through them. Dick Railes and Nahum Pelter, while approving this arrangement, did not fail to warn the others that the Indians, should they attempt an assault, would certainly try to set this barricade on fire as a preliminary, but all hoped that, with the aid of their revolvers, they could make an approach too hazardous for them to face its risks. All the extra guns and pistols were carefully examined, loaded, and placed in Castle Armstrong, while the females—including Mrs. Armstrong, who was now aroused to the necessity of exertion—were actively engaged in rehearsing and making sure of their accomplishment of rapid loading. To guard against the dangers of fire, all the pails and other utensils they possessed were now filled with water at the river, and placed at convenient points under the wagons.

In such labors the day wore on, and the sun again disappeared in the west, yet still there were no signs of an enemy. Every one appeared, however, to feel that the coming night was the most critical period of their fate, and a thrill of anxiety ran through the little party when the time arrived for placing the

sentries. Somewhat to the surprise of the western men, and yet to the obvious satisfaction of most of the company, Hugh Gifford insisted upon being placed at the perilous station by the ford, where poor Dennis had lost his life the night before. "The place is important," he said. "I feel no need of sleep, and my mind will be the easier for being there." It was finally agreed that Luke and Dr. Landale should hold the post until two o'clock, and that they should then be relieved by Gifford and Ike—Seth Armstrong insisting that at that particular place, at least, there should be two sentries for the night. There were three others posted along the line of the wagons, and as Seth inwardly resolved that some one in addition should remain awake in the Castle, he felt tolerably secure against surprise.

In accordance with these arrangements, Hugh determined to force himself, if possible, to sleep in the early part of the night, in order that he might be thoroughly wakeful at the dangerous period of his watch. Whether he saw a design shaping itself in the speaking face of Mary Anne when she heard that he and Ike were to be on watch after two or no is doubtful; but it is certain that, after the band had shared their unusually quiet and thoughtful supper, he found his way to where the girl was standing by the Castle, looking sorrowfully upon the ground. He laid his hand upon her arm.

"You will not leave the Castle to-night, Miss Armstrong."

"You are sure I meant to do so, then?—But why not?"

"There is danger in it—real danger—to which you must not be exposed."

"And you?"

"It is my duty—some one must do it—I as well as others. But on you there is no such demand."

"I have no fear."

"But I have—on your account—and I beg you not to come."

"You particularly wish me not to come?"

"Yes—I request—I beg it."

"Then I will not. Only——"

"Only what?"

"Promise me one thing."

"What is it?"

"Nay, but promise."

"Well then, I promise."

"That you will run no needless risks—that you will take care of yourself."

"I am sure to do that," said Hugh, smiling.

"Ah, you are jesting—you are not sincere. Remember the

promise should be as grave, as fully meant to be implicitly kept —as mine."

"Indeed it shall be, then."

"Good night then—and—and—Heaven guard you!"

The voice was tremulous, and Hugh turned quickly in some surprise to look at Mary Anne's face; yet even had she stood still he would scarce have seen it, for the dusk was gathering fast; but she had fled away and joined Mrs. Armstrong and Kitty in the Castle. So Hugh returned to the camp fire, and wrapping himself in a buffalo skin, lay down to sleep. His mind was ranging rapidly over many and opposite themes, and he found it no easy task to forget his consciousness; but with perseverance he at last succeeded, and fell into a gentle slumber.

At the appointed hour he was awakened by Luke:

"I wouldn't rouse ye, Mr. Gifford, but I suppose we must be strict now in obeying orders."

"Quite right. All has been quiet, I suppose?"

"Not a critter stirring; not so much as a night hawk or an owl. The doctor's been makin' what he calls astral observations."

"Where are Ike and Lion?"

"Oh, they've been up this half-hour watchin' the doctor. I think Ike's got an idea that he ought to keep about so that if the Injuns come he could pack 'em off as he did afore."

Hugh shook his head. "They won't come in a way to leave time for parley. That chance before was one in a thousand. We've no right to count on such luck twice."

"No, I reckon not. I do wish some more of our folks would happen by. That would be the best luck that could befall us now. It makes my heart sick, Mr. Gifford, when I think of mother and those two gurls, and that we mayn't be strong enough to defend 'em."

"We mustn't think of that—we *will* be strong enough."

"*She* dropped this out of her bosom by the wagon this evening, and as I was going to be where poor Dennis met his death, I thought it might serve as a sort of talisman like, and that she wouldn't miss it until to-morrow morning, so I put it here over my heart."

As he spoke, Luke held in his hand a small, morocco-bound volume. Gifford took it mechanically and looked at it by the light of the fire. It was a Testament, and as he turned it over it opened at the fly-leaf, and he saw there written, in small but distinct characters, the name—

"MARIAN ROOKE."

And as he returned the volume, by the same light of the fire he looked into Luke Armstrong's honest eyes, and then Gifford saw for the first time that Luke loved her.

"Strange," he thought, as he went to his watch, "passing strange. And yet, why strange? Is it remarkable that a fine, honest, young fellow, strong, comely, well-principled, should fall in love with a beautiful girl—a poor girl, too, with nothing but her own exertions to depend upon for subsistence? Is it strange that Luke should love, ay, or marry her? Is it not rather natural? True, there may be something incongruous between their manners, their educations; but in a new country where the strong arm and the manly spirit are the main stays for protection and sustenance, what matter?"

So reasoned Hugh as he stood in the starlight, glancing up and down the stream, now looking before him, now behind, ever vigilant as feeling the deep responsibility of his trust.

"What matter?" he mused, his thoughts running into a frequent channel; "what matter for culture, reflection, intellectual graces? In a country like this it is the capacity for rude toil, the power which accumulates and retains material things alone which is desirable, for it alone gains leadership or distinction. What matter? That a woman full of refinement and rich in feminine delicacy, highly educated, keenly appreciative, should love and wed a rustic, hard-handed ploughman! A mere boor! No, no, that is unjust; Luke is not so bad as that; a good fellow with a sound heart and plenty of common sense, if not much book-learning; and, perhaps, after all she may fancy him; stranger things have been."

Here Hugh began to think that somehow it *did* matter, notwithstanding his subtle arguments to the contrary. He fell to envying Luke.

"Something to love—something to love! What a hope, what a daily pleasure, what a nightly consolation!" His eye fell on Ike and Lion sitting together at a little distance. The man's arm was thrown caressingly round the dog's neck, and he seemed to be whispering to the creature, as, indeed, he often did. "There; what a comfort does that poor fellow hourly enjoy in the affection even of a dumb beast, while I——"

Here his conscience gave the dreamer a sudden twinge; for was he not also blessed—blessed with the love of Virginia?

A cool night breeze came hurtling and sighing through the melancholy trees, and seemed to answer the question sadly enough. At the same moment Gifford heard a muffled cry, like the distant shriek of an owl. "Some signal, perhaps," he thought,

and he grasped his rifle more tightly and peered more anxiously into the obscure around him.

A log came floating gently down the river, and slid into the shadow of the bank beneath the spot where he stood. The next instant a figure rose as if from under his feet, and, as swiftly, Gifford's rifle was at its breast.

"My brother will not shoot," said the calm, deep voice of Washashaco, "he will not fire upon the friend who trusts him."

The young man hesitated: "One of our number has been treacherously slain when Washashaco was our guest; when we discovered the crime, Washashaco had fled away, and could no longer be found."

"He knew that his white brothers might doubt him," returned the chief, quietly; "but when he saw that the Pawnees were at hand, it was needful that he should at once find and talk to his braves. There is little time to tell stories on the war-path."

"You say that the Pawnees are at hand?"

"One of their scouts made his way hither unperceived by the Delawares. He crept on the ground like a snake, and surprised the white man who stood here last night. Something frightened him, and he crawled away, taking neither his scalp nor his rifle."

"When knew you that this deed had been done?"

"Washashaco saw that the man was missing when his brothers assembled to eat. He passed quickly this way, and found him dead: then he crossed the river, and struck the trail of the Indian who had slain him: at noon he came up with him in the mountains and took his scalp. Behold!"

Gifford turned with disgust from the ghastly trophy. "And where are my brother's young men—the braves of his tribe?"

"One is close at hand, the others a few miles away."

"And the Pawnees?"

"About as far, but in another direction. My braves thought they would remain for another day to rest, but the one who has come thinks otherwise; he thinks they will be here to-morrow. Washashaco, therefore, sent him at sunset to bring up his warriors at once."

"How numerous are the enemy?"

"They are very many. My brothers will have to fight hard. But they can depend upon the Delawares. I go to lead them hither."

Gifford paused and reflected. He was in doubt as to the wisest course for him to pursue. Ought he not, now that the chief was in their power, to insist on his remaining in the camp, at least until the imminence of the danger was past, or until

further investigation could be made as to the murder of the sentry?

"Will it not be better for Washashaco to remain with his white brothers? They will then be satisfied of his friendship, and that he had no hand in the killing of their friend. He can fight here with his brothers, if they are attacked, as well as elsewhere. Will he not remain?"

"The Delawares will not fight well without their chief. Washashaco must go to lead them."

Hugh again hesitated. "His brothers thought it unfriendly of Washashaco to leave them without farewell at the moment they had lost one of their number." He stopped, not knowing exactly how to suggest a doubt without giving offence.

"Washashaco's ears are open."

"I may be blamed for not urging him to remain until they can see him to shake hands with him in the morning."

The Indian looked intently on the speaker with his dark, glittering eyes: "My brother doubts the good faith of Washashaco?"

"I do not; but others, perhaps——"

"Listen," said the red man sternly. "I go to bring my braves to the help of my white brothers. I will not remain in their camp. I will shake hands with you in sign of faith with all. A chief of the Delawares cannot lie. I have spoken."

He stretched forth his hand, as he concluded, with an air of command so princely, that Gifford could not repress a thrill of secret admiration. During the colloquy, too, the dog Lion had approached, and, recognizing Washashaco, gave every indication of pleasure and confidence. The Indian looked down and smiled.

"Be it so," said Gifford, with decision, and grasping the proffered hand; "I will tell my friends that the Delaware chief will not fail them in their hour of need."

"Let them be watchful as the lynx, for the Pawnees are many and cunning. The battle may be long and fierce, but the victory will be the more glorious. I go."

"Farewell, then, brave warrior. The battle has many chances, and we may meet no more."

"The Delawares are taught to carry their lives in their hands, and they know that their time on the earth is short," said Washashaco, solemnly. "The Great Spirit has ordered that my people shall disappear one by one from their old homes, and that the children of the white man shall take their places. A few years, more or less, matter little to Washashaco or his braves,

and, if they die gloriously, they care not when their hour may come. They may die; but they will remain faithful to the mighty memories of their race. The children of the Lenni Lenape will not give their fathers cause to blush in the happy hunting-grounds. To the last, the name of the Delaware, driven from his lands, broken in numbers, fading away, like a mist, though he is, shall be respected and terrible among all the tribes of the red men! Their footsteps are far from their ancient home, and their bones will whiten the prairie a long way from the graves of their fathers; but their spirits will dwell in the land for ever! They will roam at will through the forests and the plains, they will lie on the banks of their own loved rivers, and listen to the sound of the mighty cataract! And they will wander freely over the hunting-grounds, which once were theirs, long after the last red man has been taken from the earth, and the memory even of the race which succeeds him shall be forgotten!"

The chieftain was silent, and ere the last deep tones of his voice had ceased to vibrate, he had folded his blanket about him, and his tall form had glided swiftly away into the darkness.

CHAPTER IX.

THE sun was some hours high, and the little band were awaiting, in sullen expectancy, the onset of the savages, which now seemed inevitable. For since daybreak they had seen, at several points among the hills behind them, curling puffs of smoke, which not only told that the Indians were near, but, what was still more ominous, that their numbers made concealment needless.

The sun was some hours high, yet he gave only an imperfect light. It was one of those heavy, vaporous atmospheres which, when we feel they carry no moisture, seem so inexplicable; an atmosphere often seen on deserts where no water is, or in climates which have dry seasons long protracted. The sun's rays, struggling through the murky air, gave a sickly, yellow light, and the luminary himself looked a dull, red ball.

The mountains east of the camp appeared shadowy and dim; the clear outlines and tangible colors, seen by the party on the hopeful eve when they descended to the banks of the stream, were no longer visible. No more sunny slopes and reaching

vistas; no more purple and blue and gold; nothing but huge, indistinct masses, suffused with a dreary monotone of grayish red.

The plains on the west looked arid and obscure. They were desolate enough to the eye at the best of times, but the vast stretch now appeared inexpressibly sombre; and the long waves of soil, and the scanty shrubs which crested them, were all tinged alike with the pervading muddy hue.

"Nahum thinks there must be an awful sight of 'em," half whispered Seth Armstrong to Gifford, as they stood on the small eminence which overlooked their line of defence. His grizzled face was lined with anxiety, and his voice came a little thick as he spoke.

"Few or many, we must fight them," replied Hugh with a white light in his eye, which always came there in moments of resolution. "We've done all that men can do in the way of preparation, and we must look to our own right arms—and God's help—for the rest."

"His will be done," said Seth solemnly. "I would ha' liked to git across in peace, but if so be that we must fight for't, why fight let it be."

"They don't seem to vally us no more'n so many beavers," observed Nahum Pelter, sauntering up to the group on the hillock. The man was chewing more rapidly than usual, but this was the only mark he showed of sharing any uncommon interest. "I shouldn't wonder if there was a hundred of the red devils."

"Pray Heaven not," exclaimed the doctor fervently, "or we've had our last supper."

"Time enough to cry when we're hurt. Ten good men, with plenty o' grit and a little luck, have whipped a hundred red skins afore now. Shoot low, shoot steady, never throw away a shot, and allers have some loads in reserve; them's the pints we want to look to."

"And so we will," cried Luke cheerfully. "Who knows? If the Indians get a sharp repulse at the beginnin' of a fight, I've heard they'll often give it up and leave. Let's hope it 'll be so now."

"They ain't like to quit," said Dick Railes, "onless they think that by hangin' on, others may come up and take a hand, and so add to the chances agin 'em. They know darned well how onlikely it is for us to git help while the scrimmage's goin' on."

"You forget the Delawares," remarked Gifford.

"There's the pint. Accordin' to what the chief said to you, he didn't think the Pawnees would be here for a hull day; and

look at 'em! Now, if his men don't come up soon, it looks to me as though we'd hev to fight without 'em."

"Depend upon it, he knows the danger, and will strain every nerve to forestall it. But look! They will give us little time, I fear!"

All eyes were turned in the direction indicated, and as speedily saw how grave was the cause for the speaker's apprehension. A large body of Indians appeared on horseback in their rear, and were slowly winding down the defile taken by their own train in descending the foot hills. They made no attempt at concealment, and rode in irregular order, as if perfectly at ease, and confident of carrying out their designs. At the distance, nothing more could be discerned than that they were about twenty-five in number, and that, although some carried fire-arms, the majority seemed only provided with lances and bows and arrows.

A feeling of relief came over the hearts and faces of the white men, as each thus descried, and drew his conclusions from these details of the approaching array.

"Come," said Seth, drawing a long breath, "come! If these be all we've got to handle, we mayn't have sech a bad lookout as we thought for."

Nahum Pelter shook his head. "There never was Injun yet who showed his hand like that without hidin' somethin' he didn't show. They've jest divided their gang, that's what it is, and they're goin' to close us in all round, same as they do the buffalo!"

An exclamation burst from the doctor as Pelter finished, which drew attention from the east to the west.

"Look! look there!"

Far away on the plain there appeared a knot of horsemen seemingly on the verge of the horizon. There might have been six or eight of them, and so far there was no great occasion for alarm; but presently others were seen to the right and left, as if they were beating the plain for game. In another moment still more became visible on the outskirts of the others; and now there was no part of the semi-circle behind the line of the wagons, but was dotted with dark, threatening figures. All were mounted, and all were converging as to a common centre, straight down upon the little camp.

"There are seventy of 'em if there's one," said the doctor with a groan.

"To your posts, men!" shouted Seth, hoarsely; "we've no time to waste!"

The dispositions which had been agreed upon required some modification, owing to the probably complicated nature of the expected attack. It had been thought that a very small portion of the scanty force would suffice to hold the ford, and it had been determined to place the men likely to be most efficient, along the front line, where they would have ample cover, and could use their rifles to the best advantage. This arrangement was so far hastily altered as to put Nahum Pelter in charge at that now critical point with three others, including poor Ike and his constant companion. It was thought, and justly, that the dog, sagacious and amenable as he was, might do good service in the event of a rush being made by the enemy in numbers at the crossing. This little band was provided with double sets of rifles, besides revolvers and long knives; and Nahum had, in addition, a large ducking gun, which, to use his own expression, he had "rammed full of slugs" for close quarters.

On the left of the front, Dick Railes was placed in charge, supported by the doctor and two others, Luke holding the centre, and Seth himself, with Hugh Gifford, being stationed at the Castle. The party was thus detailed over a line of some forty yards in length, the river covering their rear with tolerable efficacy, save at the weak point so well guarded by Pelter.

It was fortunate for the little band that the ground on the opposite bank of the stream was low and flat for a long distance toward the hills, and that it swelled upwards on their own side, forming a knoll in about the centre of the camp, depressing again as it ran to the line of wagons. The result of these accidents was that no raking fire upon the men holding the main line could be opened in the rear from the opposite bank; while it enabled them to gain time by reconnoitring, and, if need be, opposing an approach in that direction, from behind the friendly shelter of the ridge, without entirely drawing off their attention from enemies in front. The position was certainly a very strong one; whether it were sufficiently so to enable the garrison to hold it against vastly superior numbers, remained to be seen. The Indians on the plain had now approached to within a distance of about four hundred yards, while those descending the defile had apparently come to a halt, since their column had for several minutes remained without emerging from one of its turnings which concealed it from view. Those on the plain now dismounted, and it could be seen that their dress was somewhat similar to that of the chief of the Delawares. They were, however, of inferior height and presence, and their countenances were hideously daubed with paint. Most of this party bore

ort rifles, as well as knives and tomahawks carried in their lts, while the rest, in addition to the latter weapons, had for-dable-looking spears.

One of the party now advanced a few yards before the others, d, with amicable gestures, unrolled the long skin which he d carried at his back, and performed the manœuvre employed by ashashaco, as an indication of friendly intentions. Upon this monstration, although having small hopes of its sincerity, th and Gifford ascended the knoll and made friendly gestures response, which were in turn reciprocated by the savage. At s point of the proceedings, the Indians slowly and cautiously ew somewhat nearer, and their leader made signs, proposing t his party should enter their camp, and pay the white men isit. To this thel atter signified a courteous refusal, which s not altogether well received. The Indians soon commenced iolent discussion among themselves, which terminated in their ef, with some difficulty, intimating to the whites that his id had missed one of their number, whom they supposed to in the travellers' camp, and that unless he were given up y intended to come and search for him. To this Seth and ford could only reply that the missing man was not there, l again decline the proffered visit. The warrior then sug-sted, by way of satisfying his braves, that the white men uld all come and show themselves on the eminence where ir spokesman stood, and thus prove to the Indians that their t comrade was not among them. This transparent artifice or Seth, in his earnest desire to avert a collision, failed to see rough, and he called to the others to join him on the ridge, hich most of them were in the act of doing, when the bass out of Nahum Pelter was heard behind:

"Be ye all mad? Do ye all want to git shot down in a nch like wild pigeons? Down! down! every man while he n!"

The warning did not come too soon; for, whether fearful their ick would be understood, or, from some other reason, that ey might get no other opportunity, the savages paused no nger. The sharp crack of a dozen rifles was heard, and al-ough they did small damage beyond a flesh wound in the igh for Jabez Fitch, and the perforation of Seth's fur cap, ey were well meant enough to clear the knoll in a trice, and rive the whites to their post, intent on sharp hostilities. At e same instant, the report of Pelter's rifle rang through the r, followed in quick succession by three other shots. The hole front line now opened on their assailants in a volley, and

the Indians, with demoniac shouts, rushed forward to the assault.

Keeping up a running fire as they advanced, the enemy reached a point within twenty yards of the wagons with a loss of only two or three of their number; but at this critical moment the garrison delivered their reserved fire with deadly effect, nearly as many savages falling as there had been shots. The advance wavered, and finally retreated in confusion, bearing off their fallen companions.

An exulting cheer went up from the little band as they swiftly reloaded their weapons and exchanged congratulations. None were hurt at this first onset, and they accepted the immunity as a happy augury.

"Well done, boys!" cried Pelter, his huge form appearing on the ridge from the ford. "We've peppered three on 'em, sartain, down on our side, and they dursen't take to the water! Keep on as well as you're doin', and we'll beat 'em off yet."

"No one is hurt?" asked Mary Anne, looking anxiously from the wagon.

"None, thank Heaven," replied Hugh; "but pray do not show yourself thus; you will attract their attention, and draw their fire on the castle."

"We have four guns," said the girl, "and are ready to use them."

"Not yet, not yet; things are not so desperate yet as to make it needful or wise for you to expose yourselves. Pray retire."

Even as he spoke a bullet struck the top of the wagon, and, tearing away a shred of canvas in its course, sped on across the river. A cry burst from Luke, who saw the incident from his post.

"Back! back!" he shouted, "and lie down in the wagon! There's men enough left to be killed without women helpin' 'em. See! the red devils are comin' on again! Make her go in, Mr. Gifford, do!"

"I will go in," said the girl, steadily, but very pale. "I will go in, but only because I can do as much within as without." Indeed, she and Kitty had cut slits in the canvas on the side towards the enemy, and now prepared to swell the next volley as the foe came on, by pointing through these apertures the arms they possessed.

Small time was given for preparation, for the Indians were rushing forward with as much show of resolution as before. This time they advanced in much looser order, spreading them-

selves further apart than at first, and leaping and whooping to distract the aim of the whites. The latter, however, prudently withheld their fire until the enemy was even nearer than at first, and then poured in a double volley with much more destructive effect. Again the assailants retreated, and again were congratulations exchanged.

But matters were looking graver at the ford. Despite the cover of the group of cottonwoods, one of Nahum Pelter's handful had been hit, and although the wound was not fatal, it was serious enough to keep the sufferer from being of further use in the fray. He was carried back to a safe place by Ike, and the doctor summoned in haste to his assistance. Thus the defence was at once weakened by two rifles, a fact of which the red men were speedily aware.

They did not attempt for the present a third general advance, but contented themselves by keeping up a heavy, though desultory fire, hoping by chance to disable others, and make the remainder an easy prey when they should resolve on a final charge. This policy the white men met in turn, by keeping securely behind their cover, and wasting no ammunition in reply. An hour thus wore on, the little band lying grim and resolute on their arms, the Indians actively circling about them striving to spy out some vulnerable spot, or to catch a chance at some exposed one of their otherwise invisible foes. Tired at last of these unproductive tactics, a new manœuvre was resolved upon, and to their other dangers the beleaguered band were now threatened with those of fire.

A shower of burning arrows were thrown among the brush which has been described as forming an *abattis*, and connecting the wagons while it masked the movements of those behind. Should this be consumed, not only would they be deprived of their best cover, but openings would be made whereby the enemy might make their way into the camp. The water which had been prudently made ready to meet this emergency was now used with good effect; but those who used it were necessarily more exposed than before to the fire of the Indians, and the man Fitch, who had been slightly hurt earlier in the day, now fell mortally wounded by a bullet through the body.

At this heavy cost the flames were extinguished; but it was clear that the assailants could repeat their incendiary efforts whenever they chose, and even should they be defeated at a similar expense, on each occasion, it was easy to reckon the small space that lay between the devoted party and extermination.

The Indians were apparently satisfied with this prospect, and willing to rest awhile from their labors. Their fire slackened, they no longer threw burning arrows, and the white men thus found time for hasty consultation. It was long past noon now, and the hope which had buoyed many of their hearts during the unequal strife had begun to fail them.

"Where," asked Seth, drawing a powder-blackened hand across his brow, which looked ten years older since yesterday, "where, think ye, are the Delawares?"

Hugh shook his head without reply. He was, indeed, miserably disappointed; for, irrespective of the pressing need of his services and those of his warriors, the young man had placed implicit faith in Washashaco; and he grieved as much as a man could grieve, surrounded by so much that was exciting and engrossing, over the chief's defection.

Pelter crept over to say a word, but it was not now a word of encouragement; and Luke came over and grasped his father's horny hand with a sad look at the wagon, more expressive than words; the doctor came, too, with set teeth and a bandage about his head. They had lost four out of their scanty number, besides one or two with slight wounds. All saw, what none cared in words to express, that there was nothing before them but to die like men.

On came the Indians once again, and again the now desperate band rushed to their posts for a last struggle. Again the blazing missiles were hurled into the brush, and the flames this time mounted higher than before. Again were desperate efforts made to extinguish them; but the fire had more heart this time, and so had the assailants. With yells and screeches and appalling whoops, they swarmed on, not heeding now those who dropped among their number. The last shot of the whites was expended, and still their foes swept on. The blaze now caught one of the wagons, and at this place a gap had been made, larger than any other. Through this gap poured the exulting savages, but the two first fell by the rifles of Pelter and Ike, who sprang up the ridge to help beat back the assault.

At this terrible moment Seth Armstrong was hit by a chance bullet, and his right arm fell powerless by his side; but, nothing daunted, he seized an axe, and stood bareheaded, with his gray hair streaming in the wind, in front of the wagon where the females were, prepared to defend it to the last. But Hugh Gifford sprang toward the breach as if, though but for a moment, to contest its passage. As he did so a terrific war-whoop sounded from the ford.

"Hurrah!" shouted Nahum Pelter, as he bounded down from the slope, "hurrah! 'Tis the war-cry of the Delawares! Stand firm, boys! We'll lick 'em yet."

As he spoke, the giant threw himself headlong into the gap, whirling his long rifle, and dashing the Indians right and left to the earth at every whirl. It really seemed that he could hold the pass single-handed against the surging mass who opposed him. For three minutes, in truth, he did so; and those three minutes doubtless saved the lives of the rest of the party, but they cost the gallant frontiersman his own; for he fell at last like some noble tree, surrounded by the dead and wounded of his foes.

During this struggle Ike had pressed bravely forward to the aid of his comrade, but, before the latter had fallen, the poor simpleton was struck in the breast by a tomahawk hurled by a savage who had managed to pierce the line below the larger breach. As he fell, the dog Lion sprang with a fierce howl at the throat of his assailant, and bore him also to the earth; but a second red man was close at the heels of the first, and he raised his hatchet to brain the noble beast from behind. Whether incited by the imploring look in Ike's eyes as he lay on the ground or not, Gifford was fortunately in time to anticipate this stroke; and, clubbing his rifle, he dealt the Indian a blow on the temple, which stretched him lifeless by Ike's side.

Having succeeded in overwhelming their huge opponent, the Pawnees now leaped in numbers over his body into the camp, but they met other and fresher foes than they counted upon; for Washashaco with his braves had crossed the stream above the ford, and now rushed down the hill, uttering the terrible war-whoop of the Delawares. This onset, so sudden, so unexpected as it was, appeared to fill the Pawnees with terror. Six or eight were shot down at once, almost without lifting a hand, and the next instant the Delawares were upon and among them, striking and destroying without mercy.

The females now handed freshly-loaded weapons to their friends, and a volley from Luke, Dick Railes, and the Doctor, discharged into the crowd on the plain outside, completed the discomfiture of the attacking party. They fled in all directions, leaving their dead and wounded to the mercy of the conquerors, while they sought to reach their horses on the open beyond. The yells and shots of their pursuers, however, produced a stampede among the horses, and doubled the confusion of the rout. The Delawares followed up their advantage relentlessly, and, in half an hour, of the numbers who commenced the attack, scarcely a tithe were living and unhurt.

Washashaco, returning from the pursuit, found his friends mourning over their dead. He paused by the body of Nahum Pelter.

"He was a great warrior," said the chieftain, solemnly, "and died as a warrior should. My brothers can now go forward in safety," he continued, pointing to the plain, where the last of the broken enemy could be seen flying before the victorious Delawares. "My brothers can go on their journey in peace; there are now no red men to stop their path from this place to the Great Lake of Bitter Waters!"

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

'HE time has arrived when some brief explanation may be fit-
, both as regards what has already been given of this nar-
ve and what may hereafter be related. There is a piece of
rmation which, although it may not be strictly due to the
ler, is yet likely to be in some degree satisfactory, as clearing
loubts and solving the manner of treating the characters of
ain individuals of our story, which otherwise might appear
e needlessly clouded and incomplete. When the author first
ermined on his work, his design was to set forth with tracing
adventures of its principal personages from the time when he
encountered and knew them in the wilds of California; but
ıfterwards thought such a narrative would be better rounded
more interesting if the reader were made acquainted
h the eventful journey across the plains on which those char-
ers first met, and whence the mutual influence of diverse
ures might be supposed to have begun. Thus it fell out,
n, that what he has called the First Book was taken down
elly from the lips of Hugh Gifford, a circumstance which will
lain the absence of any particular elaboration touching that
ıtleman's own peculiarities; and also, perhaps, account for
ıe indications of reticence in describing the motives or
ughts of others. So far as these omissions are concerned,
y might possibly have been fatal to the intelligibility of his
y had not the author been able to elicit from feminine
ces such links and fragments as connected the gaps, and
bled him to construct a tolerably comprehensive whole.
nan beings are rarely good judges of their own moral or
ıetic development, but those among them who are the best,
seldom apt to be free in imparting its history. Hugh was

more like William the Silent than Michel de Montaigne, and although he would readily tell you what he had done, or even at times what he meant to do, he was grudging as to what he had thought and felt. But Marian—well, we shall see and judge her for ourselves, for it was many weeks that we lived within sight of her almost ideal beauty, within sound of her musical voice, in the same family, indeed, all of us digging and straining for yellow earth, in the lovely country that nestled about Armstrong's Bar.

Beautiful land of California! Beautiful in thy soaring mountains, beautiful in thy laughing plains, in thy lakes and valleys, thy brimming rivers and thy sublime cataracts! Noble and yet mysterious land—where with all the vastness and solitude of primeval wilds there were found long reaches of velvety turf, shaded by giant trees, and as free from underbrush as an English park; reaches where one could gallop for miles and miles and yet see no sign of a living thing; where after some long and easy ascent, perchance, the trees grew thicker and the air grew darker, till of a sudden, bursting on the eye with a flood of light, there stretched below a landscape of such surpassing and cultivated loveliness that the gazer could scarce believe—such is the force of prejudice and association—that it had not been for ages the abode of man, smoothed, softened, and redeemed from natural savagery by works of art and of agriculture. But as he gazed on he saw that it was not so. No line of smoke, no roof-tree, could his narrowest scrutiny detect in the spacious panorama before him. No broken column relieved with its sculptured whiteness the unvaried green of the foliage. No fragment of some springing dome intercepted the endless waves of the tree-tops. No cattle or sheep browsed over the boundless meadows so loaded with luxuriant vegetation, as if for their needs. No figures—more mournful deficiency than any other—no figures of human beings with crooks in hand and bits of bright color about their dress, to catch the eye with a comforting assurance that life and sympathy were there! Nature alone—nature at once grand in her own majesty and made delicate and various by the constant suggestion of refined inhabitants, but of whom the closest eye could find no trace. It seemed as if capricious genii had swept by night through some Arcadian vale, rich in the labor of classic hands, stored with piles and piles of priceless architecture—temples, arches, fanes—and borne them, like Aladdin's palace, carefully away, leaving nature's work and nature's work alone behind.

Such was California—at least, such parts of it as I best knew.

California, which, with her delicious atmosphere, her sunny skies, her teeming fertility, has tangible attractions besides those of all her pomp of scenery and her feverish glare of gold, to draw earth's discontented wanderers to her soil, and, if they be wise, to keep them there. For me there is no need to call up associations connected with discoveries of the precious ore, to think of California as essentially a land of romance. The air alone—so different from that of the harsh, easterly exposures of the Atlantic coast—makes the pulse quicken even in memory, and the heart beat with retrospective gratitude for its inspiriting beneficence. Where the body is healed and comforted, the spirit is likewise apt to be, and the recollection of life is most prosaic which is passed in ungenial climes. Physical discomfort—the constant struggle against unfavorable external conditions—is a sad drawback on poetic memories as well as poetic feeling; and although the Norsemen had bards as well as the Greeks, there is not much difference of opinion as to the relative inspiration of their muse. The misery which is taught in song may come of the east wind, but its love and its melody, its perfume and its hope, must be inspired by the balmy breath of the south and the west. Yes, California was to me a land of romance; and not less so that I met there for the first time those friends of ours with whom the reader is already somewhat acquainted.

It was a soft evening in the spring of 1851 that, having wandered in many directions with many objects, chance or fate drew me near the spot where these friends had made their camp and set up their tents. All the afternoon I had been walking, trotting, or cantering my horse through such park-like glades as I have essayed to describe. The last stopping-place had been twenty miles behind, but the day was fine, and the track not difficult to follow, since one had merely to keep within easy distance of a stream which flowed on the left, and on whose banks the settlement, which was the goal of my journey, was to be found. There had been, however, an abrupt rise in the rolling country, and for some miles the tall trees, always ascending before, told me I was gaining a considerable elevation. This led me to swerve more to the right, to keep clear of the river, whose banks must now be high and precipitous; and, thus inclining, the forest grew denser, until the tall redwoods seemed almost disposed to dispute my further passage. It was getting towards evening, too, and although hostile Indians were said to be few in that region, yet an occasional grizzly was stumbled upon, and was pretty certain to prove a very dangerous customer. Just as this disagreeable thought flashed across my mind, the deep bay

of a dog rang forth in the thicket beyond, and put to flight all fear of any such terrible neighbor; for it was not the bark of an Indian's cur, or the dismal whine of the *coyote*, and I knew at once that white men must be near. A few moments longer, and my conviction was verified, although the faces I saw would scarcely have passed for Caucasian in an Atlantic city. There were two of them bronzed to more than a mahogany color, and, at the first glance, neither in expression nor manner did the strangers seem very prepossessing. They were seated on a log in a small natural clearing, and a mountain brook was babbling along beside them; two men in leathern hunting-shirts and leggings of what appeared to be of the same material. The elder had little else in the way of dress or trappings, save a broad knife stuck in his girdle; he had a white line scored across one cheek, as I afterwards learned, by a rifle bullet. The younger man was more curiously arrayed, for his dress was plentifully bedecked with gaily colored feathers and beads, interspersed here and there by pieces of bright scarlet cloth. The two had a tin ewer or pan on the log between them, which they were shaking back and forth, watching it the while with eager interest.

"Down, Lion, down!" cried one of the men, just before my horse emerged into the open. "There ain't no Injuns near abouts, I tell ye, and as to the bars, they're a gettin' too all-fired smart to travel so close to the settlement. Down, I tell ye!"

"Lion knows more nor you or me, Dick Railes," exclaimed his companion. "If he says red-skin, it's red-skin. If he says bar, it's bar. He don't say neither bar nor red-skin now, though, seein' he knows it's a white man!"

As he spoke, the dog burst into the area, baying furiously, for the intruder was close at hand. My horse was a trifle restive under this ungracious welcome, and I hastened to establish more friendly relations.

"It *is* a white man, my friends," I cried, "and one who means no one harm; so, perhaps, you'll call off this trusty sentinel of yours, whom my horse seems to think a grizzly in disguise."

But Lion barked no longer. The sound of my voice, and the fact that his companions knew of my presence, were quite sufficient for the sagacious creature, who now lay down close to the log in silence, only questioning my every movement with his bright, penetrating eyes.

"More on 'em!" said the elder man, in a discontented tone. "That's three since Sunday. Honey and bees is nuthin' to 't.

You air a stranger, you air, sir. You're welcome sure enough, so fur's hung beef and hoe-cake goes, and a shakedown for that matter. But there's poor diggins round here. That's so. May be," he continued, his face brightening with a look of sudden hope and reassurance, "May be, ye don't reckon to stay round here? Like as not, you're goin' on to Yankee Jim's, or Shirt-tail Canon?"

I shook my head. "I was going to ask you to show me the way to Armstrong's Bar."

My interlocutor groaned. "You're sure ye hadn't rather keep on to Yankee Jim's? It's dreffful poor pickin' hereabouts. Have a chaw, stranger?"

"Not now, thank you. Then you don't know the way to Armstrong's?"

"Know it? Why, I know it backwards, and every inch fifteen miles up and down both sides of the river. Ye hain't heard how fast they're scratchin' out the coarse gold up at the Canon, have ye?"

I explained that I did not come for the immediate purpose of digging, but to see the country; and that my object was to proceed at once to Armstrong's Bar. The first part of my statement seemed to afford my companion great relief and satisfaction.

"Don't mean to dig, eh? Well, it *is* hard work, and harder down our way than most anywheres else. As for the Bar, I kin take ye there, and I will. Not that the boys like strangers pooty well. They're kinder sot agen 'ém. There was an editor there last month from Marysville; a curus kind of a chap, but I guess he means well. His name was Zelotes Pangburn, it wor; and the boys treated him as slick as they knew how; but he turned agen 'em."

"Hooray!" shouted the other so suddenly that the dog leaped up with a quick bark of sympathy. "Hooray! here's the shiny arter all! Ike's found it—more'n there is anywhere on the Bar! Hooray!" and he held up in the palm of his hand a little heap of glittering dust.

"Shut up, can't ye?" growled Dick Railes; "ye'll have the hull of Californy on the Bar, with your boastin' and howlin'."

"And s'pose I did," cried Ike, "there's more'n enough for all on 'em! and when there ain't, Ike 'll find more still—mountains of it."

"I tell ye what, Ike," proceeded his comrade, "s'pose you and Lion travel on ahead, and tell Miss Armstrong and Kitty this 'ere man's comin' on to the Bar; they'll want to scare up sumthin' for supper."

Ike was nothing loath to accede to this arrangement, and he set forth, as they assured me, by a short cut, which would bring him to the settlement much sooner than my horse would carry me. This cut led toward the left and down the cliffs, Armstrong's Bar being directly on the banks of the stream, a couple of miles further on. Dick and myself proceeded by a more circuitous route, having to pass around the base of a series of lofty hills.

"He's only a poor nateral," observed Mr. Railes, in a deprecating tone, as he took in a gigantic slice of his favorite weed, "only a poor nateral. But the folks thinks a heap of him, and he kin fight like sin, he kin."

"Fight?"

"Fight. He and that there big dog o' his'n jest put four redskins through their dickies atween 'em, out there on the plains. That's so, I was along and seen it; and it wor the hardest day's fight I ever see. Most o' the boys on the Bar was in it, they wor; and there was more that never came out of it."

"You had a rough time of it?"

"Rough? you can bet high we had. 'Twas just touch and go whether any on us ever came out alive. I never think on't but I feel my scalp half off, and put up my hand to see if it's thar."

"And your friends at the Bar were in this struggle, you say?"

"Most all on 'em; old Seth, and Luke, and his wife and gals, and the Scotch doctor we've got there, and Hugh Gifford, and Ike, and Lion—you've seen them—and a heap more; let alone them we buried where they fell. There was a chap named Pelter, as good a hunter and as true a shot as ever dropped a buck or hit a dollar. He saved the hull party, he did; for he stood like a rock, and blocked the hole where the Injuns was tryin' to pour in, till the Delawares came to help us."

"So that most of the party escaped?"

"Yes. Some on 'em hurt bad, though. Uncle Seth had his arm broke, and poor Ike was hit in the chest with a hatchet. It stunned him like, and the big dog had the redskin that hove it by the throat quicker 'n greased lightnin'; but it wor all day with Lion, it wor, if it hadn't been for Gifford; for he jest cooked another devil who was arter splittin' the critter's head open. A minute more and the Delawares were among us. Painters and screech-owls! I can hear 'em a hollerin' now! Louder than thunder, and sharper than a steam-engine! But it wor the pootiest music we ever heerd for all that; for we knew it was friends, and it meant we were saved."

"And you; were you unhurt?"

"Not quite; I wor tickled up in the ribs some, and got this wipe across the cheek—nuthin' to speak of. So you see, stranger," continued Mr. Railes, spirting a parenthetical oblation far ahead; "so you see, arter goin' through sech lively old times in company, the folks up at the Bar kind o' froze together; and though they hadn't thought of it afore, only meanin' to hitch hosses to cross the plains, they agreed to try and stick to the same diggins, and run with the same machine as long as they could. That's why I'm down on Zelotes Pangburn."

"He interfered with this association, then?"

"Not that you'd say he exactly interfered. But he went and stuck a lot of stuff in his paper, down to Marysville, 'bout what fat diggins and slick folks there was up to Armstrong's Bar, and how complete and pooty it was, and this set others a chatterin' down at Frisco and other places, and we've just been bothered with strangers ever since."

"Well, you understand I don't come to dig or to give trouble, and——"

"Oh, no offence; I was only explainin' to ye, ye know, 'bout Zel.; we're all glad to see folks who don't come to make trouble interferin' with claims. Arter all, we don't do much more'n make a good livin'; for grub, and boots, and tools is so all-fired high, anyhow, and teamin' makes 'em come so much higher, it don't leave much room to dicker on; but we're happy and comfortable together, and, if we was let alone, there ain't none of the party 'd vote for a change."

It was nearly dusk now, and as my tired horse stepped slowly along, Dick Railes walked by my side, beguiling the way with his rambling accounts of the people at Armstrong's Bar, their likes and dislikes, their adventures on the plains after the encounter with the savages—which adventures were, as usual after any highly perilous and exciting one, dull and commonplace in comparison—the exploits of Lion and the eccentricities of his master, the troubles the party had overcome in getting cover over their heads when they first came on the Bar, and so forth: until, when the stars began to wink through the thickening obscure, and we wound slowly down the hill side into the little settlement, I knew nearly as much of its habits and its history as my informant himself.

It was a charming spot, whose beauties not even the deepening shadows could altogether conceal. The washings were at some little distance in a bend of the stream, and hidden by intervening slopes; so that there was none of that hideous tearing

up of the earth, that rifting and scoring of nature's bosom which afterwards gave such vast tracts in California so ghastly an appearance; the appearance of a place which has been subjected to a terrific bombardment; where descending shells have sunk into the soil, and, bursting, thrown it in all manner of confused heaps and shapeless clods around; where cannon-balls flying at a tangent to the surface, have struck inequalities and laid open huge furrows of many yards in length; where the ground has been turned up from so great a depth that the mould which alone can bear green things is covered over and buried by yellow, sun-burned masses of clay and piles of sterile gravel where man, having accomplished all the desolation possible, has fled and left the place a solitude. There are three things, in deed, in whose pursuit our race make similar sacrilegious assaults —leave similar scars upon mother earth—three passions, whose traces may be easily confounded, those for war, travel, and gold. Intrenchments and rifle-pits for defence and attack, excavations and embankments for lines of railway, and tearing up the soil for the coveted metal, produce appearances which may be readily mistaken one for the other. But there was no sign of any such violence to be seen as yet at Armstrong's Bar.

They came there for gold, it is true, and if it were to be had they would have it. Those who thought, when first leaving the East, that they would till the soil, embark in trade, mend bodies, cure souls, or what not, fell to pure gold-getting at last, in its simplest form, when they came on the ground. But their toils were happily pursued out of sight of their dwellings, and—rare blessing in the earlier Californian days—women's hands were with them to beautify as well as women's eyes to keep holy; so that there were no outward marks of plutocracy about the little nest of homes. It was a very odd-looking nest certainly; something like a cross, perhaps, between a straggling Yankee village and a Bedouin encampment; the two or three edifices, half tent and half shanty; but the turf was green and virgin all around, the neighborhood was scrupulously clean, and there was a dear, sweet odor of climbing vines in the air, which seemed to sanctify the place like incense, because it reminded one of home. There was, at least, no sign of gold-digging about the place, and that of itself was an attraction.

These were advantages dimly seen and imperfectly appreciated, it is true, on the evening when I came to Armstrong's Bar; but I learned to know and cherish them afterwards, and so describe them rather from later than earlier impressions. My welcome was a cordial one, however; more so than I had any

right to expect. But Dick Railes, propitiated, no doubt, by my evident interest in his narrative, and by the more material incident of my not coming to prospect for gold, evidently did his best to launch me comfortably into the good opinion of the tiny society; and although, as usual, those whom I subsequently came to know best were at first most distant, I had passed many an evening less agreeably than my first proved to be at Armstrong's Bar.

Seth Armstrong had managed to erect a highly respectable domicile, all things considered. There were, probably, no such things as clap-boards, or planking, or shingles, within many a mile, and a saw-mill was yet unheard of in that region. But the frame of the building was of stout redwood, with the bark still covering the trees and saplings which served as timbers and joists, and the roof of heavy canvas was steep enough to give fair promise of dry shelter below. A chimney had been managed of *adobe*, the sunburnt brick used by the Mexicans, half-breeds, native Californians, or whatever else or more properly the singular population could be called, which the Anglo-Saxons found in languid possession when they came to occupy the new appanage of the great republic. There was, therefore, a very comfortable fireplace, and a bright blaze on the hearth not unwelcome to see, for the night was growing chilly. The house was of one story only, but there was a ceiling of canvas some ten feet from the ground, besides the cover afforded by the roof proper, and there were two windows, with real sashes and glass, opposite the door. The space within, which measured some forty by twenty feet, was divided into four rooms, the largest being in the centre, and forming the main apartment, while one end was partitioned off apparently for the females of the family, and the other for the men. Each of these had serviceable doors leading into the central hall, which latter was well provided with settles, tables, dressers, and such necessaries as were requisite to comfort, albeit it was idle to make any pretensions to elegance. From the middle of the ceiling, and about three feet below it, hung a hoop, to which were attached several bits of lighted candle, and which constituted a chandelier of a primitive shape and style, indeed, but having its own advantages of convenience as well as of safety, which, in an establishment so largely constructed of cotton, was not to be despised. Several barrels stood in the corners, and along the walls were hung from the wood forming the frame of the house various hams, and other articles of provender, of a dried and generally imperishable character. On one side there were also secured a rough set of

shelves, on the lower of which were arrayed a few dishes and metallic utensils for cooking, and on the upper about a dozen well-worn volumes. Floor to this unique saloon there was none, except of beaten clay, which, indeed, was nearly as hardened, with much use, as if it had been laid in the *adobe* itself.

With all its homeliness, there was an air of neatness in the room. There were curtains of simple calico to the windows, and on the little seats in front of them were bunches of wild flowers. Then, again, the floor, if only of clay, was free from litter, and the tables and dressers were as clean as hands could make them. Over the mantelpiece appeared a species of rude trophy, with a couple of rifles and a fowling-piece crossed, a bowie knife, with a pair of pistols and a belt, pouch, and powder-flask; the whole crowned with a stag's horns, which made a picturesque apex to the mass. Underneath the arms were two or three pairs of spurs, on either side of an old-fashioned mirror, a piece of furniture rather long for its width, and being one of the very few of her household treasures which poor Mrs. Armstrong had been able to bring in safety across the plains.

The roof of the edifice projected some ten feet beyond its façade, forming a kind of piazza, useful for shade and shelter; and it was here that I was deserted by my guide, after I had complied with his suggestion to dismount.

"I'll jest take off the saddle, and put the critter in the *corral*," observed Mr. Railes, "while you walk in and see the folks. 'Taint supper-time yet, but the gals 'll be on hand, and glad to see ye."

The speaker was gone before I could remonstrate, and I felt somewhat embarrassed about thrusting myself thus unintroduced and unasked into a house which, although humble enough, was evidently not a hostelry, and whose accommodation must clearly be of a limited description. I, therefore, paused in a momentary perplexity, which was relieved by the opening of the door. A flicker of red light from within fell on a face and figure which I had no difficulty in recognizing as those of the "pooty gal who lived with the Armstrongs," who had been mentioned as we came by my communicative companion.

"You are the gentleman Ike and Lion saw on the road?" asked a full, soft contralto. "You are very welcome. Mr. Armstrong is up at the Bend, but will soon be at home for the night. Pray walk in."

Which I did, nothing loath. I see her now, with her lithe yet rounded figure, and her plain stuff gown; her brow so low and sweet, and the wonderful long lashes, which swept over eyes

more wonderful still; her straight Greek profile, her wealth of massive black hair, her radiant teeth, her almost babyish mouth. I could go into rhapsodies now after all these years, and after Marian Rooke has become—but we must not anticipate; neither must we—for I hate double dealing of every kind—neither must we mislead the reader regarding the relater's connection with the more important matters of this history. Therefore, let this opportunity be embraced to explain that, although there exist reasons why he should here and there verify them by referring to his personal knowledge and experience, his individuality has little concern with them otherwise, and will not be obtruded more than may be strictly conducive to clearness and authenticity.

Two other women were in the room,—Mrs. Armstrong, who greeted the stranger with homely kindness, and pretty Kitty, who received him with shy cordiality. Presently the door opened again, and my *avant couriers* were added to the assemblage. The dog walked straight up to my side, and looked steadily in my face with an expression of deliberate inquiry; and on my responding with some customary indications of amity, he gave three slow and ponderous wags of his tail, and went and dropped heavily in a corner.

"He never forgits any one he's seed afore," remarked Ike, gravely, "nor he couldn't if he tried. He knows all them as lives on the Bar, and all them as ever came to it, and all them as he don't know ain't wuth knowin'."

No one venturing to combat this proposition, its enunciator seated himself near his dog, and commenced a process of an ornamental character, intended to enrich some portion of his costume.

"He's allers quiet and good-tempered," said the old lady, in an undertone, "'cept when he talks about the plaguy gold, and *then* he only wants to talk a bit too much. He used to be wuss than he is, but I think it made him kind o' brighter, havin' the dreadful time with the Injuns on the plains. Ike fit, and fit well, but he got hurt bad, and was some time gittin' over it."

"You seem to have had a narrow escape."

"If there was e'er a time the Lord visibly interfered," answered Mrs. Armstrong, piously, "it was on that day. Our folks did their best, but they was well nigh spent, and we women did our best—not that *I* should have had strength to do anything if it hadn't been for the pluck of that eere young lady, Mary Anne, there, who's got more grit than any gal I ever see in all my born days, and kept Kitty and me up a cheerin' us, and settin' us the example of loadin' and firin' just as reglar's if she'd been a sodger."

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"The gentleman will think me quite an Amazon," said the young lady referred to, laughing.

"So ye are, I reckon. You amazed me enough, and the Injuns enough, and more too, that time, I'm thinkin'. But 'twould all have been no use if it hadn't been for that chief I hated the sight of afore, and thought no better than a murderer! Jest showin' how folks takes themselves in in this world, and how slow we oughter be a sittin' in judgment on our fellow critters."

"You know, ma," said Kitty Armstrong, coming into the light with her golden hair, and bright, bashful face, "you know ma, that Mr. Gifford said all the time that the chief would be true to us, and felt sure he'd git us out of trouble at last."

"I know, I know. But then you see the frontier boys thought Mr. Gifford knew too much 'bout books to know much 'bout Injuns; and they was afeard he wouldn't like to fight much hisself when the time came, so that kind o' shook and wavered me in puttin' much trust in his idees."

"And he did fight arter all!"

"Like a lion! and saved that poor critter's life in the corner inter the bargain. Folks learn a good deal they never expect to when they come to cross the plains."

The huge dog here rose and stalked majestically to the door, where, turning his head on one side, he listened for a time with profound attention; after which, apparently satisfied, he slowly marched back, and resumed his position in the corner. Kitty answered my inquiring look.

"He heard us mention Mr. Gifford's name, and I s'pose that reminded him 'twas about time for him and the rest to be in to supper. He always knows when it's time for 'em to come in."

"He knows everythink, he does," asserted Ike, with energy. "The time to eat, and the time to drink, when to git up, and when to lie down. He knows things that pison, and he'll warn ye on 'em if you watch him. He knows friends from foes sooner than any man does, and none on 'em can pull the wool over his eyes. He'd tell ye where all the gold is, only he thinks 'twould be bad for ye to grow too rich all of a suddint; don't ye, Lion?"

The dog looked gravely at his master, and gave three thumps on the floor with his great tail.

"Ye see he knows every word ye say to him. What's more, he knows what ye say to each other, only he don't kear much 'bout your noticin' it, for fear 't would make ye cautious, and he likes to keep posted in all that's goin' on. Don't ye, Lion?"

Lion gave the same response as before, but he no longer

awaited further questioning, but rose promptly, and again went to the door, and listened; and this time his reconnoissance was more satisfactory, for he quickly leaped up and opened the door with the greatest ease, pushing up the latch with his paw, and giving a bark of welcome. Immediately after, four men entered the little cabin.

CHAPTER II.

"HERE we are, mother," cried Seth Armstrong, cheerily. "Here we are, richer by five eagles than we was in the mornin'. 'Taint much, to be sure, with flour at fifty dollars a barrel, and salt pork a dollar a pound, and boots at two ounces! But it's gittin' on, and keepin' our head above water, which is more than many poor critters are doin' just at present. Servant, sir, didn't see you afore; come to stay a night with us? That's right. We'll try and make you as comfortable as we kin, though the *coyotes* do haowl some and the shake-down ain't jest like the Astor House. Kitty, I hope there's something to give the gentleman for supper."

"There's six of us men," remarked Luke, with a good-humored essay at introduction, "six in all, by good rights, though Ike, there, allers reckons seven That's the old man, and this is me, and this here's Dr. Landale; he's a Britisher, he is, but he's a good kind of a man for all that, and ain't stuck up none. And that man playin' with the dog, that's Hugh Gifford. As to mother and the gals, you've made acquaintance yourselves."

"Glad to know you, sir," quoth the doctor, "only I hope you didn't come to the Bar on the recommendation of that busybody, Pangburn. He's sent so many with the idea that we were shovelling out gold by the ton as to cause some disappointment. We're just paying our way, that's all; with a good chance every day of striking a lead that may bring us to fortune."

"Fortune!" echoed a grave voice from the corner. "Not with one at such ill terms with the goddess as me, I fear."

"You! Nonsense!" said the Scotchman. "If she were resolved to make a dead set against you, you'd have left your bones among the Pawnees. You Americans are always so impatient. You must build a house, a ship, a reputation, a fortune

in a day; you *do* sometimes, and what is the consequence? Your house totters at the push of a child; your ship goes to bits in the first gale; your reputations are bright and shining as soap bubbles, and as lasting; and your riches take wings and fly away before you learn how to spend them."

"Our'n won't," said Luke, as he seated himself at a table, and prepared to weigh the glittering dust, which he poured from a buckskin bag. "Leastways, not afore we git to divide more'n eight dollars and a half a day."

"I don't b'lieve in hasty got fortin' no more than you, doctor," observed Seth, approvingly, "only I don't know as 'Merikins are wuss than other folks in such things. If they're lively and spry, it's 'cause they're in a new country, and they hev' to keep even or go behindhand. We air like a young colt, we air; when we git older we'll git stiddier."

"Three ounces and a half and an eighth," announced Luke from his scales. "Nigher to six eagles than to five, father."

"That's above the average—above the average. If we keep on, p'raps we'll ketch up to what Mr. Pangburn said we got, arter all."

"Why," I inquired, "did he overstate your profits?"

"Overstate? Well, I reckon he did, some. He said that we was takin' out fifty dollars a day to the man, and that the wildest dreams of Golcondy and the Ind would soon be outstripped by the wealth of S. Armstrong."

"But what could be his object?"

"You see, sir," growled the doctor, "he was just exerting one of the pet privileges of his countrymen. Once understand that, and they'll never deceive you. Swallow all things, but not forgetting the grains of salt. As a mountain is to a molehill, so is fifty dollars to the answer. A very simple sum in proportion, and of universal application."

"You mustn't let Doctor Landale excite your national prejudices, sir," uttered the sweet contralto I had first heard. "He has his privileges as well as our poor countrymen, and we're all afraid to offend him. You know he keeps the key of the medicine chest, and can always punish those who vex him. Besides, if he abuses us to-day he will praise us to-morrow. Why, 'twas only yesterday morning he was extolling the republic as warmly as the veriest Yankee in the land; and to a Yankee too."

"Miss Rooke omits to explain the animus," retorted the doctor, "which was that my natural pugnacity was aroused by talk of an opposite character."

"Which means that you won't let Mr. Gifford criticize the

faults of his countrymen, a practice to which you have put in a claim to a monopoly."

"It's a Briton's birthright to grumble," urged the doctor, "as it is a Yankee's to brag; and it seems contrary to nature that either should seek, as Dick Railes would call it, to 'swap their privileges.'"

"I guess the doctor's *contrary* enough," laughed Luke. "We all thought as much when he insisted on layin' out the street here, and locatin' all the corner posts, science like, with his instruments, just 'cause Dick laughed at the th'odolite."

"And why shouldn't the Bar be properly laid out? This may be the site of a prosperous city. Here in a few years there may be thousands of people, large squares, flourishing trade. This spot may become famous among the merchants of the earth, who shall flock hither with their silks and spices and precious stuffs, to exchange for the treasure and produce yielded by the soil. Armstrong's Bar may be the centre of a powerful nation, the seat of a great dynasty, the home of learning, the cradle of genius, the temple of the arts. It may become a Tyre, a Carthage, a Venice——"

"Doctor, Doctor! Ain't that awful like Zel. Pangburn?"

"Well, perhaps. But the difference is, that I am only speculating on what may possibly be, while he is always lying about that which actually is."

"I'm thinkin' there's about as much romance in one as t'other," said the practical Luke. "There ain't depth of water here to allow much trade. To be sure, there's rails. But folks ain't goin' to settle much on rails alone when there's big rivers enough to have ships and rails too. I guess Sacramenty and Frisky 'll have to take the rag off the Bar; to say nuthin' of Stockton and Beneshy and Marysville."

"Who lives will see," said the doctor, sententiously. "Meanwhile, let us have our supper."

The meal was soon smoking on the board; rustic enough, but wholesome, abundant, and clean. Moreover, to be served by such fair hands was a novelty in those days, and as such, would have given zest to a far inferior repast. The tea was hot and strong, the bacon tolerable, the bread well made, and, although there were neither butter nor vegetables, we were used to those deficiencies in the mines. Every one talked and bantered and argued but Hugh Gifford; and truth impels the confession that that gentleman did not strike me on this occasion as the most agreeable member of the little circle. When he looked at me at all—which was not often—there was something like suspicion

in his eyes; and when he spoke to me—which was less frequent still—it was with a distance almost amounting to hauteur. However, the ladies were affable, and the other men hospitable, so that I was put at my ease on the whole, in spite of Mr. Gifford's constraint; and the doctor was disposed to make up for the lack of conversational powers or of good humor exhibited by the New Englander.

"D'ye stay long hereabouts?" the former asked, as the meal drew near a conclusion.

"A—I don't quite know—haven't made up my mind; but would like to see as much of the country as I can; the scenery, I mean, and all that sort of thing."

I hesitated because I felt a little guilty. It was evident that the party were not anxious to be disturbed in their new home. Nor was there any certainty that they would or need be. When I first met Dick Railes I had seen that he, at least, was prejudiced against new comers, more especially of a gold-seeking character. There was no reason why I should enter into the explanation that I was there in a sort of half-engineer, half-lawyer capacity, with a view to determine the bounds and metes of an old Spanish-Mexican grant, which, but for the discovery of the gold, might never have been heard of, but which I had good grounds to think extended over what was called Armstrong's Bar. There was no reason, I repeat, to prematurely volunteer such an explanation; but, as I answered the doctor's question, I looked up and saw Hugh Gifford's calm, inquiring eyes fixed upon me in a manner which made me feel as if I had been guilty of a crime.

"There is lovely scenery to be found here, sir," responded the doctor, in a more earnest tone than usual, "scenery which is different, indeed, from ours, but which sometimes makes me feel as I used to feel at home in Scotland. There is, it is true, no Bay of San Francisco hereabouts; no Yo-Semite cataract, no Monte Diabolo; little of the grandeur you find along the coast range or in the great sweep of the Sierra Nevadas; but I can show you valleys as picturesque, lakes as secluded and peaceful, rivers as winding and pleasant-banked, and brooks as frolicsome as, I'll dare swear, you've ever seen elsewhere."

"You'll find the doctor an enthusiast about nature, sir," said the contralto; "he finds something to like in the hills and trees and flowers of this new country, if not always in its newer inhabitants."

"The hills and trees and flowers are not Yankees," grumbled the Scotchman, "at least, not yet; when they bestow a few of the

outlandish names on spots in this vicinity, they're so prodigal of in those more thickly settled, I dare say my admiration may cool. It's hard to keep up any enthusiasm about a Jackass Gulch, or to cherish any sweet imaginings about a Murderer's Bar. The place they call Dead Mule Canon is said to be one of the most lovely ravines in California; and I can bear witness to the beauty of Wake-up Lake; but who can preserve abiding interest in spots degraded by such diabolical nomenclature? Why, the poor natives and half-breeds should put these rascals to the blush were there any shame in them, by the contrast between their own melodious and appropriate names, and the ruffianly substitutes of the new-comers."

I heartily coincided in the justice of the doctor's stricture, but hinted that the solecisms he complained of were committed by the ignorant and thoughtless Western men, uneducated and little used to pick their expressions—the pioneers and vanguard of our civilization, who would be closely followed by others with more delicate ears and respecters of euphony, who would banish and replace by others more suitable the barbarous appellatives of their predecessors. But the doctor demurred even to this reasonable probability; he doubted it—he knew what it was to give a dog a bad name—and he believed Jackass Gulch would be Jackass Gulch to the end of the chapter.

The evening passed with no greater jars than such mild controversies, and I found myself so much absorbed, partly by the presence of the gentler sex, and partly by interest in people so different from most of those with whom I had lately been in contact, that a circumstance quite slipped from my memory, which otherwise might have gained for me a more assured welcome at the outset. It was only when Dick Railes brought in my saddle bags, at a late hour, saying, he "s'posed I'd like to have 'em nigh me when I turned in," that the circumstance recurred to my mind. The postmaster of the settlement I had left in the morning had confided to my care a package of letters, apparently some twenty in number, for Armstrong's Bar—and they were to be given to Seth Armstrong. It was not unusual, in the absence of any regular postal arrangements, to avail in this manner of private carriage, and to intrust the delivery of the missives to the oldest or best known settler of the neighborhood where they were addressed.

"A thousand pardons," I exclaimed, "for keeping back what some of you may be anxiously expecting; but you have made my evening so agreeable as to drive all other thoughts from my mind."

The package was promptly given to Seth, who, after reading the superscription with grave and evidently satisfied deliberation, broke the seals and counted over the letters :—"S. Armstrong, Mr. Seth Armstrong, Seth Armstrong, Esquire ; that's me. Mrs. Colonel Seth Armstrong, postmarked Woods County, Ohio ; mother, that's you. Phineas Pitcher, care of Colonel Armstrong, Armstrong's Bar; Daniel Spike, ditto; Eliphalet Pike, the same; Patrick Mike, ditto ; Mr. Ebenezer Skinner (late of Biddeford, Maine), the same ; these belongs to the boys down to the Bend. Elcanor Doolittle—that's wrong, that 'd oughter gone to Yankee Jim's. Senor Diego y Santiago de Alamedn, postmarked Mariposa ; that's the greaser we hired to take keer of the critters, and who went off on Kitty s gray mustang. What's this—Massachusetts—per Golden City—San Francisco—Hugh Gifford, Esquire."

The young man held out his hand to receive his letter, and I saw a sombre shadow flit across his face as he did so. There was certainly none of the anxious yet pleased alacrity in his manner which people commonly exhibit on receiving letters, three thousand miles from home. He went to his corner, and his face grew no brighter as he looked at the handwriting on the missive; but the others were too much engrossed with their own or their friends' letters to notice his disquietude. Yet no; there were eyes besides mine fixed upon him. For as I turned away lest my gaze, as it had once or twice before to-night, should attract his attention, it fell upon the countenance of Marian Rooke. She was studying Hugh Gifford's. Her lips were slightly parted, and the color was coming and going on her olive cheek as with one who watches for some critical contingency. She sat opposite to him at some distance, and had in her lap some sort of woman's work ; her hands had left it, and one, wandering up to her brow, had pushed back the mass of black hair, making the forehead look wider than before; while her elbow rested on a table by her side. I looked but for a moment or two, feeling some compunction at penetrating a mystery wherein I had no concern. But in those two moments were crowded, thus inadvertently, all manner of traces of what had gone before, all manner of prophecies of what was to come hereafter. I had already been told something of the common vicissitudes of these people—something of the history of their mere outer lives; I had suddenly gone beyond this, and had stepped within the portal of the history of their hearts.

CHAPTER III.

I SHALL make no further apology than has been already made or implied, for either extinguishing my personality when it becomes necessary that I should be, in a manner, a spiritual rather than a corporeal witness of the scenes which are to follow, or reappearing when such personality should be remembered in the few wherein I was a positive actor. The reader will be satisfied, I trust, with the assurance that my sources of information may be in all cases implicitly relied upon; and that in every instance when I was not absolutely present *in propria persona*, I spared no pains to obtain both personal and circumstantial testimony as to what occurred. So far as my present agency was concerned, I was merely a *deus ex machina*—that is to say, a Mercury—to the extent of bringing letters to Armstrong's Bar, which paved the way to my becoming more intimate there afterwards—but I must overcome this absurd tendency to anticipate.

The scene which appeared so full of significance to the observer was one which could be but of rare occurence. Mails were not frequent, and letters for small and remote settlements were often long in reaching their destination in the early mining days. Not more than twice or thrice before had letters arrived for the dwellers on Armstrong's Bar. Not more than twice or thrice, then, could such a cause have risked the betrayal of a secret like that the observer saw, or thought he saw, on this occasion. Those who were most interested in such a secret—if it existed—spoke of the letter next morning in a way which might well make it appear imaginary.

It was early morning, and they were walking on the luxuriant virgin turf which carpeted the banks of the stream. A beautiful dewy morning, with spangles everywhere on the ground and no clouds in the sky, except some long, gorgeously-colored strips, which latticed the rising sun. The gold-seekers were not yet at their daily toil, and Marian and Gifford often rose and walked thus early, before the others were even stirring.

"So you have had a letter?"

"Yes."

"From—Virginia?"

"From Virginia."

"She is well, I hope?"

"She writes as if she were."

"And your friend, her brother, and the rest of the family?"

"Quite well, she says."

"She is anxious about you, of course?"

"She is anxious about my prospects."

"Prospects?"

"Yes; of making money, to be sure."

"And is that all she is anxious about?"

"What else is there she should care for?"

"What else? Why, your health; your thoughts; the state of your mind; the books you have read, whether by nature or man; the people you have met; the views you have seen; your recollections of the dear days which have gone by; your hopes for the future. Should she care for none of these?"

"She has been taught—as I have—that all these things are subordinate to the chief one. If I have health or strength, luck or cunning, such as enable me to gain gold, the rest is as nothing."

"I think you must wrong her; a true woman cannot be so mercenary."

"No one was ever called a bigot among an assemblage of roundheads. The talk of the people about her, their every aspiration, their thoughts when they lie down and when they get up, by their firesides, in the market, in the very house of prayer itself, is of money, nothing but money. If her father falls asleep after dinner, he mumbles about stocks and prices; if a neighbor dies, he speculates on the cost of the funeral; the very atmosphere is weighed down with covetous whisperings and the echoes of hard bargains. I do not blame her."

They were strolling on as they talked, and he broke little bits of twigs from the bushes, and cast them idly into the stream.

"Then she knows that my life has been darkened by poverty. That there are many—not more industrious and not more clever, perhaps—who are far on the road to success, while I am still a beggar. She knows that such little talent as I have can never buy me distinction or honor in this country, unless I can back its feeble stress with gold. She knows that my father was an unfortunate 'gentleman,' and lived to be patronized by his shoemaker, and to receive half scornful nods from his tailor."

"That made him none the worse."

"But more unhappy. The proudest spirit breaks at last when thrust into the dust by fortune, to be trampled on for ever by the vulgar and the mean, as he was. Curse them! These men can see the difference in the blood of their cattle and pigs—they know the distinctions between the cart-horse and the racer—

they acknowledge gradations in the quality and value of unreasoning beasts, but deny them to the nobler beings their Maker has created in His image! And this they call democracy!"

"Perhaps they go too far the other way in older countries. Perhaps they are too ready to set men over each other, and exact honors for them which should only be paid to Him alone."

"Perhaps. But what is the idolatry they substitute here? A very Mammon's. The naked worship of the golden calf. They give plenty of religious liberty otherwise. You may worship as you list, or let it alone altogether; but dare to scorn or hold in contempt this money-god—dare to refuse your homage to his priests, never minding how they got their benefices—dare to dissent from the thirty-nine articles in the prayer-book of Plutus, and although the tortures of the Inquisition or the fires of Smithfield may not be revived for your body, as for unhappy heretics, your social punishment and disabilities will hardly be less. Being in Rome, you must do as Romans do; you must conform or starve."

The girl gazed thoughtfully in the stream for a moment, and answered:

"Your peculiar experience makes you unjust, I think. There are many poor men whose names will live in the nation's history; men who never had wealth or strove for it, and whom their countrymen yet delighted to honor. I see no harm in your trying honestly to amass a fortune; it is necessary to your happiness—you are sensitive, and fret under the ills, real and imaginary, which want of it entails; it may hereafter enable you to do good; why should you not, then, struggle to obtain it?"

"Why not, indeed?"

"And yet, considered singly and abstractedly, what an ignoble incentive to exertion."

"Ignoble?"

"I call it so. That is, for any one capable of anything higher or nobler, and having in view the elevation of those whom he loves and who love him. Now, if I were a man, and had a—Virginia——"

"Well!"

"That is, supposing Virginia to be the Virginia she would have to be for me to love her, I should feel degraded in her eyes even by the avowal—the confession that money was the principal object of my ambition. As an accessory to comfort and convenience it might be well enough, and not to be despised. But I should not believe I truly loved—nay, more, I doubt if any one ever truly loved—when the thought of the be-

loved object did not awaken a loftier ambition, if there were need of any at all. I should feel that to accomplish some noble action—to attach my name to some deed or cause which shou d enlighten or confer a benefit on mankind—to aid the oppressed, or to teach truth when truth was unpopular, and its advocates had to contend against the powerful, the scornful, and the unwilling; I should feel that to do these, or any of these, was of more worth as a trophy to lay at the feet of the loved one than all the gold that lies buried in the hills of California!"

The girl turned and stood still in her earnestness as she spoke; her tall figure dilating, her breast heaving, and her great black eyes flashing with enthusiasm.

Something like a flush of shame mounted to Gifford's brow as he replied:

"And if your idol cared not for these offerings—held them cheap to the more material if less romantic one?"

"It should be mine to lift her to a higher sphere—to elevate her nature to a height which is possible for every human soul when rightly directed and adequately inspired—to a height where her desires would cease to be grovelling, her aspirations incapable of being mean."

They walked on again, and the young man ceased to break twigs and cast them into the stream. The girl resumed half musingly:

"For why is love given in this dark world, but that its light may enable us to help each other upward and onward in the sublimest path; but that the devotion of one soul to another may endow it with the clearest, the most unerring perception as to the manner in which the beloved spirit may be developed to the highest excellence—to the grandest expansion of which it is capable; and, knowing the means, should continually stimulate the chosen one to their adoption?"

"I fear Virginia would scarcely comprehend such thoughts as these."

"Then you should teach her."

Once more they wandered in silence, presently broken by Hugh:

"Perhaps one day you will teach her for me—you know we are always to be friends."

"Always. But does Virginia say nothing more?"

"Not so much as Marian has said this morning."

"Marian! It was Miss Rooke last night."

"Ah, there was a stranger; and as Mrs. Armstrong persists in changing your name into one she thinks more euphonious, it was needless to advertise the discrepancy."

"Good Mrs. Armstrong; she always would have it 'Mary Anne,' and it was too unimportant to correct her. The name was familiar to her, and I suppose her ear would recognize no distinction were I to have done so. The strange gentleman seemed interested in our little circle."

"He seemed inquisitive enough."

"Was he—disagreeably so? I did not notice it. He struck me as educated and well bred."

"Do you think him attractive—handsome?"

"I scarcely scrutinized him closely enough to answer as to the latter," said Marian, laughing, "but I *did* think him rather attractive."

Gifford's brow clouded slightly. "He is a gentleman, or something like one, and you have been thrust among rude people of late."

"But very, very kind ones, all. The Armstrongs have been like parents to me, and what could be more courteous, nay, chivalrous, in the way of demeanor to a poor lorn damsel than that of Luke?"

Again the cloud. "Luke is at no pains to conceal his admiration."

"Admiration! Luke! Why, he feels toward me something as he does toward dear Kitty—the regard of a brother."

"And brothers in his rank of life are always bringing their sisters fragrant wild flowers, and curious bits of minerals, and strange fragments of golden dust and ore-bearing quartz; and finding lovely mountain views for them, and solemn, glassy lakes among the hills; and training vines which bear sweet-scented blossoms over their chamber windows!"

"No, no; these are for all of us; and, besides, you forget that I am 'the stranger within their gates.'"

"Not always to remain so, perchance."

"To remain," said Marian, putting the most obvious construction upon an ambiguous speech, "until midsummer, at furthest. My friends here are very good, but I have work to do for myself. When we first came I was ignorant as to the nature and extent of the settlement; but it is clear now that I must go to one of the towns. There are no children to teach in the mines. They are to be sought among the families of traders in the cities."

"You will go forth alone?"

"Why not? It is my duty—should be my pleasure—and I must earn my bread."

"You are not fit for such a life. You have not been trained

to it. You will find its drudgery irksome, if not insupportable."

"I do not fear it. I believe we are so constituted that we can accomplish almost anything, however foreign or repugnant at first sight it may appear—anything which is undertaken with a firm heart and a resolute purpose. I am grateful to these worthy people, but, except for their love and kindness, do not mean to be under obligations to them. I shall go in July."

"And I, I think, before that."

"You?"

"I am impatient—feverish. The beggarly gains to be gleaned on the Bar may answer for the others—not for me. Nor is there any necessity they should. The newspapers may contain exaggerations, but it is certain that great discoveries are being made all over the country. The gold-lists of the mail-steamers tell a story not invented by the scribblers. What others do, I can do."

"There is a chance at any moment of striking vast deposits here as well as elsewhere."

"A chance, yes. But we have been here several months, and the yield has been most niggardly—less than the average at any of the surface-diggings we have accounts of. It was thought, from the situation of the river, and its having its rise so close by in the mountains, that this spot would prove one of the most productive; but it has turned out the reverse. The Armstrongs seem disposed to remain, but that need not control my course. Our arrangement of partnership is terminable any week, and that which satisfies them does not satisfy me."

"The rolling stone——"

"Is just the one which *does* gather moss in gold countries. It is vain to waste time in places where careful search is unremunerative. I believe the true policy to be that of moving from point to point with all convenient speed, so that, each failing successively, another experiment may at once be tried. Ultimately the lucky discovery must be made, and fortune be the result."

"And, with fortune, happiness?"

"Alas! who knows?"

CHAPTER IV.

The party were at breakfast, when a growl from Lion, folwed by the swift patter of a horse's hoofs, told that a stranger as approaching. "Somebody from the Bend, may be," sugested Seth Armstrong, "come over for their letters." But his elpmate, looking out of window, negatived this supposition. ou could tell miners, indeed, from afar off, their almost invariible dress being such as was worn by our friends at Armstrong's ar. A red flannel shirt, belt, trousers thrust in strong, coarse oots rising above the knee, and a wide-brimmed, felt *sombrero*, onstituted their uniform, which was recognizable from a greater istance than was commanded on the winding road from the indows of the cabin.

"'Taint no miner," said Luke, as he thrust his curly head into the aperture next to his mother's; "'taint no miner, in a dress coat and a stove-pipe hat! Darn my skin," he exclaimed with sudden interest, "if it ain't that Pangburn come back agin!"

"Show!" said Seth, "I thought we'd seed the last of him for a spell; them lies o' his'n in the 'Mounting Clarion' ought to have kept him off the Bar a month o' Sundays."

"How little," quoth the doctor, "do you appreciate the Pangburn turn of mind; or you might know that nothing short of a pestilence would keep him away from a place where he wasn't wanted."

"S'posin' we set Lion on him," suggested Mr. Railes, "and then he daresn't git off his hoss!"

"No, no," said Seth, promptly, "that won't do; give the critter a fair show now he is here; only, doctor, 'praps if you or Mr. Gifford was jest to hint that we felt a little riled about the way he *advertised* the Bar, it might make him kearful another time."

"Never fear, Uncle Seth," said the doctor, "but that we will dminister proper admonition. Not but that the hide of an alligator is less likely to be proof against such pursuasions than hat of Zelotes; yet, as a matter of duty, we will try the experiment."

The subject of these complimentary allusions was now at the oor, and Ike being sent to take charge of his horse, he speedily ade his way into the apartment.

Mr. Pangburn was about six feet in height, and was ar in a seedy black dress coat and trousers, the latter stuck i pair of huge Wellington boots, ornamented with red mo tops. He wore a high shirt collar, extremely grimy, an circled by a faded pink and yellow muslin cravat. On his was a tall black beaver hat, and on his hands enormous buc gloves. His hair, beard, face, eyes, and teeth, seemed all c color, namely a dirty whitish brown; and the latter projec a manner highly suggestive of the species called the rod Of beard, indeed, there was little, except on the end c chin, where it focalized in a pointed, bristly tuft. Mr. I burn's inability to quite cover his teeth with his lips gave otherwise prepossessing countenance a sardonic expression ful to behold; and his habit of shutting one eye in convers as he launched forth his sentences, completed the more s attractions of his physiognomy. Such was the remarkable f which now made its way into the little house of the strongs.

"How *air* you, Kernul Armstrong, and ladies, and ho you, boys and strangers! Glad to see ye. Here's tv copies of the last Clarion, 'nuff to go all round the settle never mind about pay, jest as good for an advertisement. T you, mum, don't kear if I do, hain't liquored since I le Cascades. Just so; much obleeged, and news there ain't r for the last steamer had to put into Acapulco short of coal, v the capting, in a fit of delirium tremens, jumped overboar cut his throat. That's all sence Toosday, 'xcept Sacrame burnt down Sunday night, fire lightin' in Bella Union, blers got fightin', spilt the ile, spirit lamps, run through c roof into prayer-meetin' below, hull town built up agin mornin' with cotton-duck; Kernul, I'm a lookin' at yer!"

This speech, delivered in a high key and precisely a speaker would have addressed a public meeting, was empha with innumerable winks, and succeeded by what appeared a highly sarcastic leer, which, commencing with the K swept around until it included the entire company

"Mr. Pangburn," commenced Dr. Landale, w becoming the approaching accents of reproof, "I puted to name to you that we, who live on the quite satisfied with the account you gave of us and it last m in your enterprising journal, and——"

"Knew you weren't, knew you weren't," interrupted Pangburn, derisively; "knew darned well you'd have dander up about that. Couldn't help it—three new placers

iggins', broke out on Coyote Creek and Kettletas Run—public ttention to be directed to twenty other places, so's to keep the ush from them—Armstrong's Bar one of the twenty; two slugs nd hundred copies of the Clarion—business you know—in-rease the circulation."

"Do you mean to say you publish false statements to the ect that gold is plenty where it is scarce, to distract the atten-n from those where miners could really find it?"

"False statements!" echoed Zelotes, grinning with irony. The Mounting Clarion is true, sir, as the needle to the pole, the immutable principles of public weal and commercial titood, whereon it fust took its proud stand, and mocked the battled world! That's so. A story, sir, may kinder git the lor, as the diggers say, without bein' stuck together out of l cloth. I allowed I had a high opinion of Armstrong's Bar; sentiments is unchanged and unalterable. Folks oughtn't find fault with the lofty sperits chained to the oar of journal-m—enlightenin' and a rushin' forrard the ungrateful masses, il they know the hull truth—until they're kind o' sot face to e with the paower behind the throne!"

"Well, sir," said the Doctor, impatiently, "being in that sposition, I now tell you that what you published, besides ng untrue in point of fact, was seriously prejudicial, both to e interest and the convenience of this little community."

"Pettikilarise, pettikilarise; state the items, state the items!"

"You declared that the diggins on the Bar were turning out nong the richest in the country; and, in confirmation of this ngular fable, you added that the settlers were taking out at e rate of fifty dollars a day to the man."

"Jest so, jest so," replied Mr. Pangburn, running his fingers rough his lank hair; "them air the facts."

"Then how can you justify them?"

"Justify 'em? I glory in 'em. Measured by a narrer prin-ple of temporary expediency, they may seem vain and illoosive the short-sighted and rash; they may illicit condemnation om the hasty and censorious; but what care I?

'Truth crushed to airth will rise again,
The eternal years of God are her'n;
But error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies amid her worshipper'n.'

hat 'ere is the proud predicament of yours respectfully, Z. K. ngbarn."

"Your argument may be forcible, sir; but I fail to see its plication to the practice of spreading false intelligence."

"You ain't heerd me out. Hear, and then condemn me you kin. I said my opinions was unchanged, and I adhere my primary assertion. I stick to it like death to a dead nigg I said the Bar was a pooty place, and it *is* a pooty place. I s there was rich diggin's on the Bar, and I b'lieve that there What I said about the exact amounts that was took out, I all savored of hyperbole. It was a festive vision of the ha futur', perhaps, rather than a cold recital of the livin' pres But I'm ready to back my opinions, I am, even on that pint. b'lieve in 'em, and I'm ready to stand or perish with 'em. W I propose, Kernul and gentlemen, is a jint-stock company—ye and the speaker, rising with his theme, glared about wit smile of fiendish sarcasm, "yes!" lifting his voice to a n yell. "A jint-stock company to unkiver and develop the h den treasures of Armstrong's Bar!"

"Hooray!" screamed Ike, from the corner, quite exci by this oratorical outburst, while Lion chimed in with a greiv howl.

"I know'd," pursued the orator, availing himself of the gen stupefaction which succeeded these demonstrations, and his o proposal to enforce its advantages; "I know'd when Mounting Clarion spread its glad tidin's upon the air—the tidi my honorable friend here hists his dander at—that its edi would be blamed, and its sources of information scouted as worthy of credick; and I was prepared to tote round the lo of temperary ignerminy which them tidin's would cost and i volve. But Pangburn looked to the future like true nobili and found his blazon in posterity. That's so. He saw th when he should come on the Bar, as he has come among ye t day, and after explainin' the motives which actooated his cour should offer to ratify his sentiments, touchin' the riches of t location, by puttin' down his own dimes, and goin' in with ye the jint-stock principle, that yer prejudices agen him would va ish like a vapor wreath that dims the summer moon—that would no longer be regarded among ye as Pangburn yer t doocer, but as Pangburn yer benefactor! True, I give the a good name when aperiently it didn't deserve it. Why? answered my purpose in two ways. It directed the squat interest on to the spot, and when it come, it was disappoint Now it's got a bad name, and when the gold *is* found, if all t papers from Oregon to Mariposy was to blow their horns th couldn't undo the work of the Mounting Clarion! That ai *my statesmanship*, that is, and after I've chucked in a few o' th *buckwheats*, I'll explain to ye at hull length whar I think t

i a hidin' and how I come to think so. And if I ain't as mistaken as the man who lost his shirt, fortin' awaits us; on a big scale, the hull hog and no discount; and then Columby and the Atlantic States, happy return of Z. Pang-o love and Utiky!"

e speaker here concluded his harangue, and after once again ng his teeth to the company, in a manner at once threaten-nd scornful, he employed them with characteristic vigor the viands before him.

is true that most of his hearers were disposed to regard Pangburn's views with a suspicious rather than a sanguine But it must be remembered that this was a time when ing anticipations, such as his, were often more than realized. y were the instances in those early days of men landing pen-s at San Francisco, and becoming within three months the essors of thousands. Many were the cases of people who in their lives possessed a hundred dollars, until they scraped ther all possible resources to buy their passage-tickets, accu-ating even in less time what to them were princely fortunes. re were not wanting examples where diggings, like those at strong's Bar, had been abandoned as unprofitable, and sub-ient adventurers, more lucky than the first, had stumbled on treasure and grown rich upon the wealth which their prede-ors had left undiscovered. It was by no means incredible, , that such an example might be repeated on this very spot n its immediate vicinity; and although a man's discretion as l as his candor might be doubted when, by inducing many come where few had explored before, he augmented the nces of a discovery which it was his professed interest to avoid; he might be knowing to circumstances which made discovery t to impossible, and might easily be forgiven for seeking to e the settlers so strong an evidence that they were unlikely ffect it as would lead them to put a just value on his own ncy, which could supply the clue.

t was not, therefore, remarkable that those who had so sharply matized their flowery visitant an hour before, and who even r accorded him but a grudging confidence, were yet not un-ling to consider his proposals and to investigate his grounds auguring success. There could be small harm in hearing at he had to say, even if nothing came of it. They would, such a case, be no worse off than at present, and there was a nce, on the other hand, of the happiest results. It was soon reed, therefore, between Seth, the Doctor, and Gifford, who ired as a Committee *of Consultation* pending the devastating

onslaught of Zelotes upon their provender, that that worth should have full opportunity to make good his words, and if would, to share in the profit he anticipated. They all ca there for gold; and, provided they got it, there would have be little objection, on most parts, to Mephistopheles himself as stockholder in the company.

"The long and short of the matter is," observed the Docto "that the fellow is an unprincipled rascal; but if he is cunni enough to teach us something we don't know, we needn't sta in our own light."

"I hardly know what to think on't," said Seth, thoughtfull "I don't see why a chap who's only been on the Bar once afo is like to know more 'bout it than men who've been digg round goin' on six months."

"After all," suggested Hugh, "what harm can he d What we make now can scarcely excite his cupidity, that should wish to share it on the same terms—hard labor and sm profit. Let him point out his wonderful secret. If he trif with us, we can warn him off the Bar, and so be rid of him together."

With this understanding the conference ended, and it w forthwith announced to Mr. Pangburn that the party were wi ing to tolerate his presence and to listen to his explanatio That gentleman, however, having stimulated the curiosity a raised the expectation of his hosts to the highest possible pit was now disposed to secure his own interests in the pending b gain. He represented, with a show of reason which could n be gainsaid, that, if by his instructions the yield of gold sho increase largely on the Bar, it was but fair that he should sh in the advantage thereof; and as the others were collective indebted to him in such a case for their augmented emolume they should be willing to allow him a liberal percentage. Th were two other parties in the immediate neighborhood who ma aged their affairs much in the same way with that pursued Seth Armstrong's: that is to say, the bands worked in conce and divided regularly all that they gained. Over these b Armstrong's party had, of course, no control; for although spot had received the name of the first comer, by common co sent, he had no legal or prospective sway over their actions. friendly feeling existed, especially as some of the men had b of the party in crossing the plains; but beyond this, and with t exception of coming thither for supplies and occasional lette there was no particular intercourse with, nor were these men *any sense* amenable to, those at the immediate Bar. Mr. Pa

was, of course, perfectly aware that, failing negotiations he latter, he could easily open fresh ones with the others, e calculated that this knowledge would have its effect in cing an acquiescent disposition on the part of his present

All he wanted, he assured them, was what was fair. He s looked out for number one, he did, but he didn't go in chizzlin'. He allowed he ought to git pooty fair pay for ne, and the "Mounting Clarion" might suffer some when is away. Those fellers over to the Bend would give half rofits to anybody who'd put *them* on such a lay, they would. e went fur for friendship, he did. He always stuck by his ls through thick and thin; and he liked Mr. Armstrong he others very much. Mr. A. was an Amurikin of the sort ked; he was his kind, he was. Give him a man that was assion's slave, and he would wear him in his heart of hearts, e did Seth; also the Doctor and Mr. Gifford, either of whom ould be pleased to have contribute to the "Clarion." Did see the pome in the last number—"Haowl on, ye base and ling crew"? They'd find it was kind of gritty; being an sion of his own, suggested by hearing the *coyotes* bullyraggin' ad the "Clarion" office at night, and remindin' him of the slatur' at Sacramenty last winter, when they refused to vote Pangburn for State printer. Somethin' in that way would lways acceptable, 'specially as they were likely to be pard's n this 'ere bargain was struck and brought to a conclusion the mean time, he reckoned that about twenty-five per cent. the excess of what they might git through his advice, over above the former average, would make 'em square.

he others demurred to this proposition. Mr. Pangburn ht know a lead that they were ignorant of; but they were ly, at any day, at any hour, to strike it. Gold-digging and ling were very hard work, and their plan was share and e alike. The democratic principle was surely most applica- to a species of labor where, without merit or demerit on the t of any individual, without either industry or indolence, he ht get nothing by a day's work, and his neighbor a hundred lars or more. They always divided even, at the Bend, at kee Jim's, and at every other place they knew of. It didn't rk well to change the rule, and they had better not try it. sides, Mr. Pangburn would frequently be obliged to leave m, and thus the company would lose the advantage of his vices, a consideration not to be forgotten in estimating their eral value. Thus far the Doctor as spokesman for the Bar. Zelotes had heerd his *honorable friend* with minglin' emo-

tions. He was surprised to hear the help he was about to b
stow, comin', as he was, to lead 'em on to fortin' and to fam
should be so far disparaged as to be only counted as the ord
nary toil of an ordinary man. As for the Bend and Yanke
Jim's, they was the Bend and Yankee Jim's. What he was
contemplatin' of now was to serve his friends at Armstrong
Bar. When they allowed they didn't want the arm or voice o
Pangburn, it would be time enough to think of other folks wh
might. He thanked 'em from the recesses of his inmost so
for their solicitood touchin' the interests of freedom's banner, t
"Mounting Clarion." It was nateral that they, sons of liber
as they was, should feel anxious about the prospects of her f
vorite organ; and when he told them that he had arranged th
those prospects should be attended to in his absence, he kne
they could be happy. When he mentioned the name of Eli
Barlow as that of the distinguished scholar he had engaged
supplement the labors of Pangburn, and ile the machine in h
absence, they would feel satisfied that all was well. He was t
partner of their toils, their feelings, and their fame, he wa
and twenty per cent. on the gross receipts was what he wou
take, and ne'er a cent less.

An agreement was finally effected upon the last-named basis
a prudential clause being inserted, that under no circumstanc
was the division to be made when it would leave to the origin
settlers a daily stipend inferior to the average they had been r
ceiving. This precaution would, at all events, prevent any i
jury to established rights from resulting as a consequence of t
innovation; while it placed the new comer in a position whic
would oblige him to increase the general wealth, or, as an alte
native, to entirely waste his time. Such was the treaty whic
being pronounced to be fair to all parties, now received the ge
eral acquiesence and solemn ratification.

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Pangburn was a person by no means without sagacit
Acuteness of a certain kind constituted, indeed, the leading ch
acteristic of his mind. Of education, in the usual sense of t
term, he had little or none He had been sent to a district s
for the winter months during several years of his boyhood; t

of the summer having been engrossed by hard work on his uncle's farm. But the snowy intervals, which were supposed by that thrifty yeoman to be devoted to learning, were, on the contrary, chiefly employed in speculations of a mercantile character, whereby his schoolfellows were the sufferers, and in the manufacture of sleds, shipping and other marketable commodities, to the fashioning of which Zelotes brought much zeal, and no little ingenuity. To do him justice, he was never indolent; and although what he called "hooking Jack" caused him to grow up awfully deficient in even the simpler branches of a country boy's education, more especially in spelling and grammar, he had at eighteen already amassed a small capital, and knew more of the little world about him than any of his by no means artless contemporaries.

To get at the key-note of Mr. Pangburn's nature, you had only to keep one thing steadily in view, which was, that the acquisition of money was never for an instant absent from his mind. Wherever he went, with whomsoever he talked, this important matter was always uppermost there, and no larger subject, no higher thought, was by any chance permitted to thrust it aside. If he ever thought of the ocean, it was with regret that it should be so unnecessarily extensive, and that the utmost ingenuity or industry of man could only be expected to wrest from it a certain limited quantity of "made land." If his reflections ever touched upon the sun, moon, and stars, they were mingled with regret that physical obstacles prevented those luminaries from being chopped up into quarter sections, or staked off in claims. He had, it is true, at his tongue's end, plenty of the current slang about matters as spacious as liberty, national glory, the freedom of the press, and the destiny of his country; but he meant no more by them than is meant by the perpetual beating of the gong during a Chinese play; they were the conventional and duly expected accompaniments of the drama of his daily life, his exits and his entrances, his dialogue and his "business." They had no true relation to either, but the audience expected them as a matter of course, and as a matter of course the audience got them.

Now, although Mr. Pangburn may not appear from this description to have been eminently fitted for the character of a public instructor, it is certain that the "Mountain Clarion," as blown by him, was heard afar off, and often with considerable effect. He was too cunning not to be aware of his own deficiencies, where they were likely to affect his pocket; and although he could not conveniently spell himself, he always man-

aged to have a sub-editor and a compositor who could. Generally speaking, one person united the two offices, although, since the advent of Eli S. Barlow, this economical expedient had been disused. The "Clarion" had been blowing only a few months at the time when our history commenced; but it had, as I have said, not been unheard. Zelotes perceived, with early intuition, that, where a population was increasing with such unexampled rapidity, where gold was being ravished from the earth in such unheard of profusion, there must speedily arise conflicts of interests and struggles of parties which would cause a printed advocate to become valuable. He possessed himself of one of the first printing-presses which had been brought into the country, a battered and ancient engine which had doubled Cape Horn, after seeing the life and death of more than one country newspaper in little New England towns. But it was a wonder when it first appeared among the diggings, and its sway and name grew great in mouths of wisest censure.

Mr. Pangburn employed his Organ, as he somewhat incorrectly termed the "Clarion," with great assiduity for the furtherance of what was stereotyped over the leading article as "The Interests and Prospects of this Great, Free, and Prosperous Community," and in his own breast as the Interests and Prospects of his cherished pocket. When he could get black mail from claim-owners, town-projectors, or political aspirants, he took it, and the "Clarion" burst into a glad song of praise, and warbled in cadences of unmingled eulogy. When he was disappointed, through the obstinacy or stupidity of such speculators, the "Clarion" gave vent to solemn denunciation, or, in the way of variety, ran up and down the gamut of coarse vituperation. The Organ, however, was costly, wages and material being enormously high; the subscribers, being chiefly of a migratory character, were often oblivious of their obligations; and, finally, there were considerations of a personal nature which made it wise for the proprietor to absent himself as much as possible from the office. He had therefore taken to riding through the country with a view to augment his subscription list, to solicit advertisements, and, as he averred, "to take a hand in wherever he see a chance to make somethink."

In this speculative frame he had first visited Armstrong's Bar; and having to this extent outlined his pursuits and character, I may proceed to describe the immediate motives which led Mr. Pangburn to believe that he could make this quiet spot the scene of a fresh golden triumph. Although utterly without philosophical lore of a profound character, no man was quicker than this

man in grasping the theory of physical phenomena, which he could make subsidiary to money-getting. He knew, as he often declared, as well as any one, that water would run down hill. To the careful consideration of so simple a commonplace as this, with the cognate incidents which it, like the water, always carries in its bosom, many a great fortune has since been due. Whenever Mr. Pangburn struck running water in this land of gold, he immediately began to examine and peer about the adjacent country, in order to satisfy himself as to whether it had always been flowing in its present channel. There was no particular novelty in this idea. Dr. Landale had thought of it when he first came on the Bar. But the difference was that the Doctor, with all his scientific knowledge, had failed to hit on a fact that Zelotes, with nothing but his insatiate thirst for gold, had detected. The little river which ran by the door of our adventurers had indeed long, long before forsaken the old track through which it had struggled to get toward the sea. The neighboring country was greatly diversified, and scored here and there with rifts, and gullies, and deep ravines. By one of those accidents of heavy freshet, or volcanic eruption, or crumbling soil, which ofttimes produce such mutations, the bed of the stream had been changed.

Between Armstrong's Bar and the place which has been alluded to as "the Bend," the inequalities of the surface were most rugged and bold; and this was the case for a mile or more towards the interior. The curve of the stream between the two settlements was elliptical in shape, and very long; to that degree that, while the distance between them by water could not have been less than six or seven miles, it was less than a third of that space across the country. Now the water had found its way long ages before from one point to the other in nearly a straight line; and only had recourse to its present devious path when, through the unknown cause referred to, it could adopt no other. The old bed, then, lay between the Bar and the Bend, and deflected towards the present one about a mile below the former; and this was what the astute Mr. Pangburn had discovered.

The cabin of the Armstrong's was almost immediately on the bank of the river, and not more than a mile, perhaps, from its ancient channel. But such was the broken character of the intervening country, that no horse could traverse it, and a man would find it extremely difficult. To get to the place, then, from the Bar, it was necessary to go down the stream for about a mile, and then make one's way up again, in a direction far to the right of that which has just been described. This, after

profound cogitation, Mr. Pangburn had done. He had gone in the saddle as far as he could penetrate. He had then dismounted encouraged by the signs he found about him, and made his way onwards after securing his horse to a tree. His path was by no means an easy one, for it crossed at almost every turn with thickets and thorns, and huge fragments of rock, and impenetrable *chaparral*. Still, he was more and more sanguine of the correctness of his supposition as he got further. Finally, he came to a dark, narrow gorge, which seemed absolutely impassable, and which could neither be avoided nor taken in flank. The soil under his feet was gravelly and uneven, and he slipped at almost every step, but he had struggled manfully on until this last obstacle became manifestly insuperable. At that moment, his eyes getting used to the twilight, the heart of Zelotes leaped to his mouth and his skinny frame thrilled with joy; for there in front of him, piercing the gloom of the deep ravine, and in spite of the intervening brush, he saw on the ground a tender sparkle, which made his spirit exult as it never exulted before. It was a fragment—tiny indeed, but still a fragment—of virgin gold.

When the editor of the "Clarion" left the ravine, his saddle-bags were stuffed with earth he had scraped from its bottom. And the first result of the careful washing of that earth at the earliest favorable opportunity was a good ounce and a half of the precious metal. The second, as we have seen, was that of leading him to return very soon to the Bar, and to make that proposal to its denizens which has been already described.

It is improbable that our discoverer would have brought himself to admit others to share his counsels and his profits but for a necessity which could not be avoided. He had with great labor and pains brought away enough of the precious soil on which to try a conclusive experiment. This had involved time as well as labor, which were to be added to the chances of detection when any wayfarer might step in to anticipate or divide his gains. To turn his discovery to the best advantage, it would be necessary to convey water to the spot; not in slender driblets, but in a copious and a continuous stream. Such a supply could only be obtained from the river, and must be brought thence by some mechanical contrivance. There were no quartz mills in those days, and although mercury was often used to separate gold from dross, the method most in vogue was the simplest; that is to say, the method of placing the auriferous soil in any hollow vessel and adding water; after which, by shaking, stirring, or rocking, the greater specific gravity of the gold would cause it to drop to the bottom, and the remainder of the mixture being

poured away, its most valuable ingredient would remain as a precipitate. Water must be carried from the river; and to carry out this necessity the aid of those on the Bar became indispensable.

Having unfolded thus much to his new friends, who listened with the gravest interest and attention, and having exhibited the gold he had procured in the canon by way of confirmation, Mr. Pangburn properly observed that the first thing to be done was to devise means for the transport of the first essential to success—the water of the river. This opportunity for the exercise of his abilities as engineer of the company, put the Doctor in high spirits.

"What's the difference in level?" he inquired, briskly.

"I dunno. How should I? I reckon, tho', it must be higher 'n this, else what would the water run here for?"

"That doesn't follow. It would be very unfortunate if it did. The stream might have been been diverted by an obstacle, which had no necessary connection with the land it ran over *afterwards*. Its true that the tendency of a disused channel is to fill up, as it is that of one in use to deepen; but we can determine nothing until we know the real difference of level."

"Well, how are ye goin' to git at it?"

"Easily enough, with a little time and patience; it will take more to build an aqueduct."

"We call that a *flume*, we do."

"Call it what you like, it's the same thing. But before we go to the expense of such a work, we'd best test the place a little further."

All agreed as to the expediency of such a precaution, Mr. Pangburn being so satisfied with the prospect as to make no objection. A party was accordingly sent off under his guardianship, and, after three hours' absence, returned with a considerable quantity of the soil, taken out as he directed. The result showed that his sagacity was not at fault; for, from a quantity of earth about three times as great as he had first practised upon, they succeeded in obtaining nearly five ounces of gold-dust. In the mean time the Doctor had contrived to manufacture a couple of rods with sliding disks, and his theodolite being in tolerable adjustment, had commenced, with the help of Luke Armstrong and myself, to run a line of levels from the river to the new placer. It was evening when this labor was concluded, but the result was tolerably satisfactory; the surface of the water having been found to be some fifteen feet higher than that of the ground whence the earth had been taken. A consultation was

held that night after supper, and it was resolved to transfer the scene of their daily toils to these newer and richer diggings. If, after a week, appearances continued encouraging, the company would go to the great expense of bringing boards from the nearest saw-mill for the construction of a flume. For hewn timber they must rely on their own exertions; and as Dick Railes promised to see to that part of the work, just confidence was reposed that it would be thoroughly performed. It was considered that the water would necessarily fall very much as the dry season advanced, and this suggested the building of a sort of reservoir which should be supplied by force-pumps; an expedient which would enable water to be delivered at the new diggings, even when the stream should fall, if possible, to be as low as the level of the cañon itself.

At the end of the week the party had taken out nearly sixty ounces of gold, a result which was voted to warrant the expense and labor of the flume. Accordingly the materials were contracted for; a proceeding of itself attended with some difficulty, since the experience of the last season had put the miners on their guard about providing for water in the dry solstice, and these structures were being put up all over the country, causing a great scarcity of the timber whereof alone they could be made. The combination of pluck, science, steadiness, and cunning, which was now at work on Armstrong's Bar was well calculated to overcome this or much greater impediments to success. In a fortnight more the flume was built and in operation.

The fame of these operations, of course, was bruited abroad, and although the "Mounting Clarion" week after week continued to declare in the most unblushing manner that the diggers on the Bar were not making their salt, and that what had been discovered there had proved to be only inferior and scanty surface stuff, it could not deter some greedy adventurers, who would see for themselves, and who put no faith in "Clarions," from settling in the neighborhood. The original company, on the other hand, had staked out claims as extensive as the laws then allowed; and they possessed a vast advantage in their flume, which had cost the labor and capital of many to complete. Some time passed before another was attempted, and in the interval the gains of the company were steadily increasing. It became evident, even to the least sanguine, that a few months of such prosperity as they now enjoyed would make them all rich. Some who came to California wandered from point to point, setting up their tents now in one place, now in another, and departing from each as penniless as when they arrived. Some had tried a dozen ex-

periments before finding what they called a paying location; and some unlucky ones never found such a location at all. The party at Armstrong's Bar were more fortunate. They had paid their way even in the worst of times; they had not been lured to abandon the spot of their first election by glittering fables of others more prolific; and they seemed to be reaping the reward of their fidelity, in wealth which was now pouring into their coffers with swift and bewildering reality.

CHAPTER VI.

"A HUNDRED pounds of pure gold! It looks pooty, don't it?"

The speaker was Mr. Pangburn, and it was a Saturday night, about two months after that gentleman's association with the party at Armstrong's Bar. It was their custom on Saturday nights to add up the gains of the past week, and then to place them with the general store for safe-keeping. In the absence of an iron safe, a deep hole had been sunk in a corner of the cabin, which, with the aid of *adobe*, some flat stones, and a heavy wooden lid, or cover, provided with hinges and a ring, constituted a sort of treasure-vault. In this receptacle there reposed, during the rest of the week, a strong iron-bound box, secured by two padlocks, about two feet in length by one in height and breadth. On Saturday nights this box, being unearthed, was put where it now stood, on the table in the middle of the room, to receive the fruits of the week's toil, and the admiring salutations of its collective owners. There it stood, wide open, with various little bags of nuggets, and some curious specimens of crystals and quartz-bearing gold, arranged about its sides; but in the middle was a smaller box of tin, also furnished with a padlock, and also open; and in this inner sanctuary was the pile which feasted the loving eyes of Mr. Pangburn.

Gold was there in all shapes and many sizes; molten lumps which showed the action of fire, and rounded lumps which told of that of water. Large pieces of the size of a pigeon's egg, and tiny spangles scarcely bigger than the point of a pin. Queer-shaped bits, here and there, which fascinated the eye by grotesque resemblance to people's heads and legs; regular bits now and again, like coins and ornaments, which you would

scarcely believe had not been fashioned by human hands Variety, too, in color as well as in form, was there. Warm-looking gold, with the reddish tinge of copper; pale-looking, delicate gold, having some admixture of silver, with various intermediate shades between. A good deal of the precious earth was in the box; and it lay in little irregular heaps, with mountains and valleys, and bright yellow plains and dark purple ravines breaking and diversifying its surface. The light fell from the chandelier, which was made of a hoop, and which hung from the roof, and the company were seated close to the table, with all their eyes riveted on the glittering heap in its centre.

Mr. Pangburn had insinuated himself rather nearer than either of the others, and was toying at the treasure with his great coarse fingers, as if the sense of touch as well as that of sight gave him an exquisite pleasure; and, while he enjoyed himself with so undissembled a satisfaction, the Doctor, who sat opposite, seemed to be watching his hands with a flinty suspicion in his hard Scotch face that he was scarcely at pains to conceal. Perhaps he might have thought Mr. Pangburn capable of putting pitch upon his fingers, in anticipation of such an opportunity; and yet the surmise would have been unreasonable, since it was not difficult, if any one were so disposed, to overreach the others in the daily routine of work, by adroit processes of withholding and concealing; and, to do him justice, no one had ever seen a trace of such a disposition on the part of Mr. Pangburn.

"It's dreadful pooty stuff, ain't it?" repeated he, gloating over it with his hyena-like grin. "Twice as much as there is there 'd put up a hull stone-front block in Utiky."

"And would that be so desirable an investment?" queried the Doctor.

"It would that. You'd only put down 'bout half cost, borrow the rest on bond and mortgage at six per cent., git fifteen for the rent o' the stores, hev Tricopherous Hall or somethin' overhead for nigger singers and temperance meetin's, fifty dollars a night, and church on Sundays; rum on storage down cellar—double your money in five year."

"Oh," said the Doctor, apparently satisfied, "and that's your idea of laying out your 'pile,' when you make it?"

"Yes," replied Zelotes, "that's my idee. I might hev an organ," he added, thoughtfully; "when a man's onct had an organ he don't kind o' like to give up his holt on the public mind; it might be in Syracuse and it might be in Schenectady; but the stone-front block in Utiky 'd be my first idee. What's your'n?"

"A cottage on the Clyde," half-sighed, half-mused the Doc

tor, a softer light coming over his hard features, "with many friends, and few patients; with plenty of instruments, and time to use them; with a pretty view, and enough to feel easy, without being rich."

"That wouldn't bring ye in no twelve per cent."

"No; but it would bring in something of more worth—content."

A sarcastic smile played across the lineaments of Mr. Pangburn. "We don't kear nuthin' 'bout content, we don't, until there ain't nuthin' else to git. Our motto is uppards and onnards. We air like Alexander, we air, and would shed tears as fast as the Arabian trees if there weren't no more worlds to conquer. The stream with a more sure resistless tendency seeks not the ocean than a Yank the next gitable dollar."

"I believe you," quoth the Doctor. "Well, Seth, you've heard two aspirations; let's hear yours—let's hear the ambition of the oldest of us—of him who gave a name to the settlement."

"Why," said Uncle Seth, "I never tho't on't, honest, until jest lately, when we got to take out so much dust. I've allers had to work, and I allers expect to; and I don't raally much calculate ever to git on without it as it is. I don't want to move no more, I don't. I've moved twict; first from the Bay State to the Buckeye, and then from the Buckeye out here. I don't go back over them plains agin, not if I know myself intimately."

"Then your ambition is simply to stay and be as you are?"

"Well, as to ambition, it's a big word, and I don't jest get the hang, on't all in a minute. If it means things I'd like to do, why," looking up, and passing a horny hand through his grizzled hair "p'raps a wood roof'd be slicker 'n a cotton one—and a nice barn with stalls is a sight better 'n a *corral*. I *did* use to think," continued Seth, as the thought of an old memory, a youthful, half-forgotten aspiration, played over his face—"I *did* use to think that if I was awful lucky, I'd like to spend my old age on the Blueberry Hill Farm at Old Saybrook; where my gran'father's bones is, my father havin' bad luck, and bein' obleeged to sell it when I was a little shaver. It's a costly farm, that is, and to own it would be the only thing to tempt me ever to pull up stakes agin. But I was allers content with what Providence seed fit to send, and I ain't goin' to take to grumblin' now. It's well for all on us, 'pears to me, that, let alone havin' a roof, we've got any scalps to put under 'em; and I'm willin' for one to rest and be thankful."

"It 'ud be more Christianer to jest think of totin' my chiny over here," muttered Mrs. Armstrong, shaking her knitting-

needles and staring over her spectacles from the chimney corner, "since wishin' 's flyin' round; let alone six bureaus full o' linen fixin's and patchwork-comforters to reach from here to the cañon. But I never see a thing in trousers yet but was mean and riley on patchwork and chiny."

"Stone-front block, cottage on a somethink, and rest and be thankful on a wood roof instead of a cotton one," said Mr. Pangburn, briskly, and stirring up the gold with his forefinger, and then tasting it as if it were undergoing some culinary process. "What do *you* say, Mr. Gifford?"

"I?" said Hugh, carelessly; "why, I scarcely know. You say there are a hundred pounds weight there—scarcely twenty thousand dollars; if I had, let us suppose, five times that amount, I dare say I should go and travel in Europe."

"Five times!" exclaimed Pangburn, aghast; "a hundred thousand dollars! Why, you don't mean to say ye'd go and spend all that money among foreigners out o' yer own country?"

"I didn't say I should spend it all," replied Hugh; then observing the horror of his interlocutor, he added, "although I dare say I might—European travelling is, I hear, very expensive."

"Well," observed Mr. Pangburn, derisively, "when ye git it ye can go and travel it aout; *I* give you leave. What's your notion o' spendin' your money, Dick Railes? P'raps *you'd* like to go a' scatterin' of your substance on stony places, eh?"

"Not I," returned that worthy. "That ain't my style, that ain't. I don't want to scatter nuthin' unless it's shot if I kin get a good double barr'l, and not then if I can't hev a good smell dog in t' the bargain. I'd like a good house and a good horse, and play-day 'bout half the time, and"—peering over toward the corner where Kitty sat blushing over her knitting—"a pooty gal to help me enjoy it."

"That's you," nodded Mr. Pangburn, approvingly, "sympathizin' allers with a taste for loveliness; only ye know, Dick, the more play the less dimes, a proverb never stale in thrifty minds. It's also hard to resoom toil arter too much relaxation. When engaged in editorial duty on the 'Mounting Clarion,' no one ever know'd me to unbend the bow, a circumstance which, besides servin' the public and keepin' active the intellectual faculties, also enabled me to bind Barlow to my will when he came to take charge; he see I never spared myself, and so prepared never to git spared hisself when his turn come to the bellows. The genius of our country is to keep a pitchin' in; whereby the grass don't grow under her feet afore she hits somethink."

The company having duly admired this brief dissertation on

ndustry, the Doctor proposed that Luke, who had remained silent, should impart his views as to the enjoyment of his prospective wealth.

"Allers rememberin'," cautioned Zelotes, "that twenty thousand dollars in two months is equal to forty thousand in four months, and sixty thousand in six; lettin' alone contingent finds, and allowin' that nuthin' busts, up to the cañon."

"It seems like countin' our chickens afore they're hatched," said Luke, in response, "to talk about bein' rich yet awhile; but I think if I *was* to have my time, I'd like to git some books, and read and study for a year or two."

"Study!" echoed Zelotes, contemptuously. "What on airth d'ye want to study for? You've been to grammar-school, ain't ye?"

"Three winters," answered modest Luke; "summers I had to work on the farm, like most folks down our way, and all I learned won't hurt me much. I think a man ought to try and improve himself when he gits a fair show, and don't have to work all the time."

"Wall," said the Editor, "my plan always was to do workin' and readin' the same time; workin' for the big licks, and readin' for fillin' up the chinks, and then ye don't lose nuthin'!"

"That may do for common things—'rithmetic and geography, and such; but if a man wants to make himself knowledgeable, so 's to fit himself to be with folks who are better educated than he's been used to, he's got to buckle down to it."

"You git money enough," chuckled Mr. Pangburn, "and you'll find yourself fit enough for any society they kin scare up. This 'ere yaller stuff teaches folks what's what, a darned sight quicker 'n any books that ever was writ; and what's more, there ain't nobody nowheres but what kin understand it."

"I don't vote for puttin' too much store on money, I don't," remarked Seth, mildly. "It's a very good thing to have, that's a fact, and our folks have felt the want of it. We've worked hard for our livin' so fur, and no mistake; but I allow I'd rather hear a son of mine had a good name among his neighbors and no more money, than to hear him called a rascal, and be ten times as rich as his father was."

"That's you, Seth!" exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong, from her corner. "I'm with ye there, chiny or no chiny. And as to that critter," she continued, in an undertone, and peering specu latively at Pangburn over her spectacles, "I think he'd sell *his* father, if he's got one, for thirty pieces, quicker 'n a wink."

"Repootation," proceeded that critter, gravely, "is a fig, oft

got without merit and lost without deservin'. But eagles is eagles, and passes current all the world over."

"Anyhow," continued Luke, "it's a free country, and I take it we kin all spend our earnin's in our own way."

"That is so," acquiesced Pangburn, "and we don't hev' to pay it all away in taxes neither, like them 'ere downtrodden people in the old world. What the poor man gits the poor man keeps, and the sweat of honest labor ain't used to ile the hinges of luxurious pomp."

"Hail Columby!" bawled Ike, from his divan on the floor, where he was extended with his four-footed companion. "Hail Columby! and long live everybody but Ike and Lion! The only ones who know how to git the money; the only ones that knows how to spend it when it *is* got and the only ones whose idees on the pint ain't asked for to teach the folks wisdom. Guess when the gold gives out on the cañon ye won't be so smart; like enough then ye'll come and ask us to show ye something, and perhaps then we won't do it. Talk of gold! All ye've got in that there cake-basket is no more to what Ike kin show ye than a minner to a whale, nor a huckleberry to a pumkin!"

"Well, and why don't ye then, Ike?" said Luke soothingly. "Why don't ye show us?"

"Why don't mother, here, teach ye how to knit, or Lion to sniff out where the bones is? 'Cause it ain't fit for ye, and 'cause ye couldn't learn it, and 'cause it wouldn't do ye good if ye could," was Ike's, as usual, unsatisfactory reply. But, for all his ailing wits, poor Ike worked as hard, and as fairly earned his share as any one on the Bar. With his own free consent it had been agreed that Seth should take charge of this share, deducting what each regularly paid toward the expenses of the household. The Doctor, who had watched his case with interest, was of opinion that the change of scene from his old home on the Ohio, together with regular and healthful occupation, might effect a change for the better in his mental condition; but although there was now and then an apparently lucid interval it was always soon interrupted by a relapse into his usual condition. It was a case, indeed, which some great and unexpected shock was more likely to restore than any monotonous routine of life, and such could only be brought about by fate or accident, and could not be improvised at will.

Whatever might be the varying hopes or ambitions of the members of our little band, there was no want of energy or ingenuity in the pursuit of the common object. Day followed

day, and week succeeded week, and there was no sickness, no interruption, save on the Sabbath, to the lucrative toil. All worked as if this was the sole chance to overtake fortune, and they were determined the fickle goddess should not escape them. Occasionally Mr. Pangburn would absent himself for a day or two's attention to the affairs of the "Mountain Clarion," but the zeal and vigor with which he resumed his post at the work on his return were universally allowed to compensate for such defections of his time. He had the art, too, of making himself generally useful in a manner which gradually gained on the popular esteem. He it was who brought pipes and tobacco, and replenished the failing supply of whiskey. He who brought calicoes for the females, yarns for Mrs. Armstrong, even needles and pins, at times when those little articles were scarce and most needed. Occasionally, newspapers from the Atlantic States, and even an odd volume or two, would gladden the Sundays at the Bar with intelligence and food for reflection, which were much in request. Even the Doctor was in course of time propitiated by offerings of small nicknacks in the way of stationery, and other trifles difficult to get in the mines, but quite necessary to his peace and comfort. Notwithstanding the uncouthness of his person, and the unfavorable impression he had first made on many of the company, Mr. Pangburn was certainly improving upon acquaintance; and when it was remembered that he was, in a great measure, the author of the prosperity which they now enjoyed, it was not surprising that the settlers on the Bar grew in time to regard him very much in the light of a public benefactor.

CHAPTER VII.

I AM afraid Hugh Gifford was not a model hero. It has already been hinted that he did not impress me on our first acquaintance as a very prepossessing personage. I may as well go further, and say that it took a long time to find out the good that was really in him; and that it would not surprise me to know that the reader were very ready to appreciate the circumstance. He was in truth one of those people whom hard fortune and unfavorable surroundings lead into the habit of continually turning the worst side of their character outwards. Believing

himself to have been ill-used, whether by accident or fate; too proud to go through the world making complaints; having a finely balanced mind, and a very sensitive nervous organization; despising, whether justly or not, most of those with whom he was brought in contact; habitually taking refuge in books, because debarred from congenial and appropriate society; believing from his earliest youth that there was something incongruous and oppressive in the social structure and political tenets which encircled him; feeling that he possessed talents which in a less depressing atmosphere would enable him to do good for mankind and satisfy his own self-respect, it was natural that with such qualities and with such disabilities he should have become reserved and suspicious; it was natural that he should have become very, very proud; and it was natural that he should be, at first at least, very much disliked by nearly all whom chance threw in his way.

It is not easy to defend such a character; but it would be most unjust to condemn it. A man who, by his coldness and reticence, habitually prohibits attempts at sympathetic intercourse, soon gains more disesteem than he deserves. We are apt to resent such a want of appreciation of ourselves by attributing to the offender bad qualities, of which he has given no other evidence, and of which he may really be innocent. He becomes exceedingly unpopular; and it is not an adequate recompense that such men, disliked by society, should always be the favorites of philosophers, and, almost as invariably, the favorites of clever women. Such men have much to suffer; and whatever the origin of their peculiarities—whether they have sprung from the unmerited persecutions of fortune, or have their source in mere morbid egotism—the world is ever slow to do them justice—ever ready to listen to their censure. She loves not those who do not seek her in spirit and in truth; she is bitterly hostile to those who affect to despise her.

There was something interwoven in the texture of Hugh's intellect from which he could no more escape than from the blood in his veins. A feeling of distaste for the ways of the people by whom his boyhood and youth had been surrounded; a dislike of their dress, their speech, their physiognomy, their religious observances, their social practices; a loathing for the colorlessness of life, as life had to be lived among them; a hatred for square houses, and straight roads, and naked fields, and the other too numerous signs of dreary asceticism, of provincial intolerance. These were the outward and visible signs of a social condition which seemed to his nature most repellent, and, as the

producer of general happiness, a blank delusion. No servants or other blind teachers had ever infused prejudices into his mind. Had they made such efforts, they would have made them in an opposite direction: they would have striven to persuade him that America was the choicest country, in every respect, in the universe; that New England was the choicest part of America; and that Massachusetts was the choicest part of New England. They would have taught him that her laws, her schools, her temples, her people, were more glorious than those of Imperial Rome, or of Academic Greece. They would have insisted that no system of government could compare with one which placed its power in the hands of the ignorant many, and judiciously relegated to inert obscurity the thinking few: all these things they would have reported, and he would probably not have believed them; but no such experiment had, in point of fact, ever been made. His mind, such as it was, grew up and expanded, and took in such knowledge as it craved and could lay hold of, and arrived at its own conclusions.

He saw and felt early that to make any figure in the world he must first get money. That to get it he must meet and grapple with cunning and unscrupulous men, and perhaps become as cunning and unscrupulous as they. Where there was only one object of ambition, and the means universally regarded as indifferent, provided the end were attained, it seemed clear that no one could reach that end and hope to preserve clean hands and an unsullied conscience. The case was simplicity itself. It was running a race in a narrow, filthy avenue with crowds of dirty competitors, and mountains of mud and slime to struggle through; yet there was nothing else to be done—there was no cleaner road, no selecter companions: it was this or nothing. The conclusion was revolting enough, but really there was no help for it.

Having made up his mind to this, Hugh Gifford went his way, always secretly despising himself. He was unfortunate, truly, in meeting no loftier natures than he did—natures which might have taught him where his errors lay in a kindly spirit—might have revealed to him glimpses of that knowledge which surely comes to each and all of us sometimes, the fulness of which is as the eternal day. He was unfortunate in the women toward whom he had ever been attracted—even in that lonely, helpless sort of way that men turn toward utterly uncongenial, incompatible women, in the absence of any more eligible or loveable—vainly groping after the help and consolation which seems so long in coming. The last and gravest—it might almost be said

the only—attraction of this kind had been no more productive than any other. He fancied he loved Virginia Chester, and no doubt he did admire her as much as any other ever could or would; but that he loved her as he was capable of loving was untrue; and he was tormented, even when most resolute in thinking of the prospective consummation of duty and inclination—their marriage—by a dismal consciousness of the fact.

Now, whatever might be its permanent effect upon his character, his meeting and association with Marian Rooke made Gifford much less comfortable—less at ease with himself—less content to pursue the path he had inwardly traced out—than he had been before. She saw, with that singular prescience which women of her stamp possess, and which is unerring as it is inexplicable, that the young man had latent qualities of a far higher and nobler nature than those which appeared on the surface of his character—qualities which needed appreciation, culture, encouragement, it is true, but which were not the less genuine and not the less worthy of all that could be bestowed to draw them forth. How far Marian was actuated by a warmer than a mere speculative interest in the matter we may fairly leave for the present out of the discussion; suffice that her self respect was of too high a standard to permit such a sentiment to become apparent, either to Hugh or others. True, they were often together, and seemed to take pleasure in each other's society; but it was known that Gifford was already engaged, and there was that about Marian which prevented people from indulging either in word or thought of the fleering sort, so common when young men and maidens talk much together. There was an exception to the general view in the breast of Luke Armstrong; but of that hereafter.

Sometimes by hints, sometimes by suggestions, sometimes by soaring pictures of what was her own ideal of life and its duties, sometimes by processes of questioning and inference too subtle to be more than shadowed by mere words, whenever the girl was with Gifford this awakening or developing influence was slowly but surely at work. Oftentimes it would be unconsciously to both, but it never ceased. There would be occasions when Marian would feel that she had gone too far; that their relative situations did not warrant her seeking to reverse his convictions, or to change the current of his resolutions. There would be occasions when he would hold half angry commune with himself, and determine that it was foolish, vain, impossible to overthrow the teachings of his whole experience, and to set up new objects of ambition. But neither of these occa-

sions were productive of any tangible results; for that which was going on was chiefly involuntary, and in obedience to immutable laws. The earth would go round the sun, and not the sun round the earth, Papal decisions to the contrary notwithstanding.

I do not mean to convey the idea that through this regenerating influence Hugh Gifford was metamorphosed, of a sudden, from a warped, self-contained egotist, to a great-souled, high-minded man; that would have been too miraculous for real life, and we have to do with no other. The process, indeed, was a slow one, and, like the incoming tide, showed a long series of advances and retrocessions. When I began to know the man—I mean when I penetrated the first crust of his reserve, and to catch glimpses of his real character—I doubted whether the good or the bad most predominated. It was a singular trait with him, at that time, to deal with people much in their own coin. I have known him to get the better of unprincipled sharpers—to turn the tables upon them when they laid their deepest schemes to circumvent him, and positively to fleece them in turn. This surely was not right. It was what he could never have done had Marian Rooke stood near, watching his course with her calm, earnest eyes. But, on the other hand, if Hugh had to deal with a man of honor—with a person of plain, guileless integrity—there could be no juster judge, no more trustworthy friend. If he alone had had to deal with him, I doubt not Hugh would have even got the better of Mr. Pangburn; albeit it had been a marvellous encounter, and opinions might well waver as to its issue. But had he to deal with Seth Armstrong, or with his son Luke, you might adventure worlds that if there were an advantage Hugh would cast it against himself.

It followed that tricky and dishonest people—and there were abundance of such in those early Californian days—were apt, on coming into contact with our hero, to hail him as one of their own order; and that upright, simple, and straightforward people—of whom there were unhappily but few—would put in a similar claim. Each class was equally sincere—equally right and equally wrong; but a comparison of their relative numbers would augur unfavorably for Hugh's reputation.

There were two of the company at Armstrong's Bar whose attachment to Gifford was utterly independent of his merits or defects. Had he been an angel from heaven they could have clung to him no closer; had he been a fiend incarnate they would have loved him no less. These were Ichabod and Lion.

The memory of the moment when, by a happy accident, life of the latter had been saved by Hugh's interposition, see ever fresh in the breasts alike of the animal and his ma Neither had the human wit to know why they should dis but both appeared to have gratitude enough to love a ben tor. The others of the party grew to understand and like better as time wore on. Those especially who did not fa Hugh before their great trial and deliverance on the plains, v mollified by the courage and steadiness he had shown on occasion. Dick Railes and his followers were of those verts: but none of them were or could be fit associates Hugh; and their intercourse was limited to a common frie ness, such as came naturally with their common toil. Lea Marian out of the question, none could be called his intim save these two alone.

So, therefore, it was, that, whether engaged in the r rough labor of digging and washing for gold—whether strol with Marian at early morning or in the dusky evening on banks of the stream—whether exploring in the fastnesses recesses of the mountains and forests for fresh sources of we fresh signs of auriferous deposit—whether sitting on the b of a lovely little lake they had found perched clear awa among the hills—whether waking or sleeping, Hugh was all invariably attended by a body-guard in the persons of the simpleton and his faithful dog.

CHAPTER VIII.

"So you'll not leave the Armstrongs after all. You won' on a solitary ramble to hunt for fresh gold-fields, but will and make your fortune on the Bar?"

Thus said Marian, as they sat together one quiet Sunday m ing by the shore of the lake which was perched up among hills. They sat on a little cushion of velvet turf which crown tiny promontory jutting into the lake. A few feet below t lay the placid water, smooth as glass. Above were the branches of a great redwood, which neither waved nor whis ed in the motionless air. All around lay an amphitheatre of hills, their outlines broken here and there by spreading folia whilst masses of dark-gray rock, some imbedded in the ea

me lying apparently loose on its surface, relieved the green, ıd told the curious eye a story of not very remote volcanic com- ıotion. At a short distance, on the edge of the water, crouched ke, sedulously engaged in the difficult problem of making a little essel he had carved of redwood, sail without wind; and Lion ay by, watching the endeavor with incredulous apathy. It was ı very lazy day, with a soft, lulling atmosphere, not common in regions where the air is so elastic. There were lumps of white cloud hanging over head and looking like gigantic powder-puffs, whose images were reflected in the mirror below, distinct and still as the originals.

"Who knows?" replied Hugh tossing a bit of stick toward Lion, and managing to land it on his back; the dog turned quickly, and, seeing who was his assailant, gave a slow wag of his tail and resumed his languid observation of Ike. "Who knows? Things look promising enough so far, but we have no assurance of lasting success. The yield may drop as quickly as it rose. This gold-digging is very like a rocket: very brilliant one moment, very dull the next. All we can do is to make the most of it while it lasts. We had a dazzling week of it, to be sure—nearly a thousand dollars a man; and the coming week may see us fall to our old average of fifty. Still, I grant the prospect is a good one."

"I am so glad," said Marian, "that you resisted that man's attempt to get the party to work on Sundays. Others do it, no doubt; but it would seem so dreary and barbarous—far away in these unpeopled wilds as we are, and a hundred miles from any church—to have no day of rest, nothing to remind one of the sweet Sabbath of childhood."

The miners on the Bar had resolved at the outset to do no labor on Sundays; and had found their account, as people usually will, by accomplishing quite as much in the six days as any of their neighbors did in seven. It was rare in those times for any of the diggers to respect the Lord's day any more than another. Their feverish thirst for gold would have made them work by night, if nature and starlight would have allowed it. When the Sundays first began to be distinguished in the various diggings, it was rather, as in Catholic countries, as a day of festivity than one of prayer; gambling being the favorite diversion, with its usual concomitants of drinking and blasphemous revelry.

"I don't know that they get more more gold," answered Hugh, thoughtfully; "but the men are more healthy and happy, for a day to bathe and tidy their clothes, and write their letters.

There are sad scenes, we hear, in the larger places on Sunday But we have gained as well as lost something by our isolation Not but that we have a very good set; but the best of men wi drink or gamble, or go a little wrong, so far from the restraint of home, and leading so strange—so unusual a life."

"You will make your fortune on the Bar," continued th girl, pursuing her former train of thought, "and return home rich. But you must not stay at home. That would be only t become settled and confirmed in ways and thoughts which ar not best for your future. You must travel; travel and study There are many strange things you should know of—many yo should see, which you have no great knowledge of now."

"True," said the young man, humbly, "too many."

"Don't say 'too many,' for that implies a hopelessness whic doesn't belong to eight-and-twenty, good health, a fortune—i prospective, and a beautiful wife to encourage you."

"Equally in prospective!"

"You will travel—chiefly in Europe, for there almost a things are to be learned. You must spend your time mostly England and France, for in those countries there is more to lea than in the whole of Europe beside. You must study the manners, their arts, their laws, and their governments—n superficially, but so as to have a substantial, if not a particul knowledge of them all. You must especially note the differenc which exist between all these things and similar or analogou ones in your own country. You must be able to judge for you self how far we in America are really in advance, and ho far we are behind the progress and civilization of other nations for the people of all countries are apt to be conceited, and t suppose, from the continued boasting they hear all around them that their own is superior to every other. You, perhaps, ar somewhat different; you seem to think that in our country—a least in your part of it—we are not so well off as others in som important respects. It will be well, therefore, that you shoul see for yourself the condition of the population in other lands so that you may form a really just comparison. After som years devoted to this kind of study and investigation, you wi return home."

"I fear," said Hugh, smiling, "that supposing all the castles to be built of anything more substantial than air—sup posing them to be resolved into solid realities—that if I foun myself in Europe with a sufficient income, reasonably assure I should falsify your sketch."

"Ah, you mean you could remain?"

"I think so."

"And I thought so—and that is precisely what you would have no right to do."

"No right? Not if I made my fortune by my own honest toil?"

"No."

"I think you combat your own theories there. You say that self-culture is our first and highest duty, but you would refuse the right to stay where such culture could be practised with the best advantage. Surely if the sight of all that is most ennobling and artistic in the works of the most cultivated of our species—the monuments of architecture, of sculpture, of painting—if the survey of what remains of the greatest achievements of our race, ranging far back into the history of the past—if the contemplation, on the spot, of the results which have arisen from the successes and the failures of dynasties—if these are not the objects whose study is most conducive to self-improvement, what things are more so?"

"There are none, I suppose."

"But yet you would censure me for wishing to remain among them?"

"No; not if you were justified in living for yourself alone. But what human being is so justified? How, least of all can, any one be justified in a country like this, where there is such vast work to be done, and so few to do it? Of what avail is your culture to be, if it is only to conduce to your own selfish gratification? How can any of us regard such opportunities of improvement—opportunities given us like talents to use for the benefit of all around us—if, like talents, they are to be wrapped up and put away in a napkin? No; you will see all you can, learn all you can, think all you can, and you will then return to give your country the benefit of what you have acquired."

"Virginia could not sympathize with all this," said Gifford, sadly.

"You ought to teach her, then. If you have the fortune, or the wit to see and use noble means for raising, or aiding, or freeing your fellow-beings, that happiness, the purest and most sublime of which humanity is capable, should be shared by her whom you swear to love, to cherish, and to protect."

"I would gladly do my duty; but natures—souls—are so very, very different. Could you teach Ike, there, to fancy Wordsworth, or Mr. Pangburn to appreciate the beauties of Tennyson? She is good, and gentle, and true; but I do not think she would understand such tastes as you describe, were I to strive ever so hard to teach them."

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"Women are, nine times out of ten, more capable than you sex are disposed to believe. At least, you can try the experiment, and should you fail, you will not have yourself to blame As for me——"

Marian paused, for the sun behind now caused some long shadows to darken the water before them, and she perceived that the company was more numerous than she had thought. A few paces off, and slowly descending the slope, were Luke Armstrong and Mr. Pangburn.

"Ye crags and peaks, I'm with ye once agin!" declaimed the latter. "I'd no idee there was such a pooty place on the Bar! Here, p'raps, the sedgy Injun once paddled his dusky canoe—here he barbecued his venison, and frizzled his taters, and had no man to make him afraid! No offence, I hope, none intended, public property, hey? And the hull company invited to a sylvan shade, sacred to love and water-paower!"

"I wouldn't have disturbed you, Mary Anne," said Luke, and there was a faint touch of reproach in his manner, "or you, Mr. Gifford, but there's letters jest come for both of ye, and I thot you'd like to have 'em."

"Thank you very much, Luke," answered the girl; "you are always kind."

"Mr. Pangburn said he'd like to take a walk," continued Luke, half apologetically, "and so he come along."

"Hopin'," added that gentleman, sarcastically, "that his room ain't better than his company."

"The place is free to all, I suppose," said Hugh Gifford, coldly; "there are no monopolies here."

"No more they ought to be. What's the use of havin' a free country if ye ain't free to go where you like in it? The beauty of Californy, when I fust come to it, was that there weren't a fence the hull length and breadth of the land, 'cept *corrals* to stow the cattle in."

"This is for you, Mary Anne, and it looks as if it had a European postmark. And this is for you, Mr. Gifford."

"Any intelligence of interest bein' understood to be bespoke for the Mounting Clarion," suggested Zelotes.

"I doubt whether mine will be of any service," said Marian, smiling, "since my correspondent is neither much interested in public affairs nor very communicative; but, with your leave, I'll see what he says."

She walked quietly away as she finished; and Gifford, after receiving his own missive and thanking its bearer, as deliberately went in the same direction, and was seen to join and walk by

arian's side; whereupon Lion gravely arose, and, with measured steps, followed in their track; and Ike, quite as a matter of course, having withdrawn his vessel from the glassy water, proceeded to follow the dog. The two thus left behind, looked for a moment at the retreating figures and then at each other.

"That ere 's kind o' sociable, ain't it?" commented Mr. Pangburn, grinning after the pair like a rat of an ironical turn. "Two's company and more isn't, eh? For I don't count that 'ere silly cuss nothink. Let on now, will ye, how long's young Bosting been sweet on the gal?"

"Sweet on her!" echoed Luke, half angrily; "he ain't—he can't be."

"It looks tarnation like it. Why can't he be?"

"Because it's impossible."

"Six o' one and half-a-dozen o' the other. Handsome gal—eyes like lightnin'—lips like coral—pooty bust—clipper-built all over. Young man silent and gloomy—stuck up, rather—no other gals round 'cept that pooty sister o' yourn and she engaged to that 'ere backwoodsman and might do better; 'pears to me natural these folks *should* be sweet."

"I tell you it's out of the question. She's too good; and I don't think, for that matter, that he's the man to do a real mean thing."

"Nuthin' mean 'bout bein' sweet, is there? That ain't what *I* call it. I never see a pooty gal yit who was too good to be cottoned up to."

"You don't understand," said the other, impatiently; "Hugh Gifford isn't his own man; he's engaged—engaged to be married to a young lady at home—his home—in Massachusetts."

"Thunder! Why didn't ye tell me that afore?"

"Tell *you!* Why should I?"

"What's a young feller like you up to, that lets a chap who's spoke for lug a gal like that right away from under his nose? Where's yer spunk? If I weren't in somethin' like the same box as his'n—not," he added in the way of parenthesis, and gazing speculatively on Marian's form, now disappearing beyond the opposite slope, "but what I *could* wriggle aout if I tried hard—referrin' to a young lady in Utiky—I'd try it on merself."

The blood mounted to Luke's brow, and he bit his lips to keep himself from an angry retort. Rough and uneducated as he was, he had delicacy and perception enough, independently of his own particular feelings, to be outraged by the incongruous association, even in idle words, of such a woman as Marian and the satyr-like creature beside him.

"You see," he explained, finally, "she's not a gurl to with any one in a common way; she knows too much. and him have read a good many of the same books—for got a sight o' book learnin'—and they like to talk toget about 'em. Seein' every one knows he's engaged, and al treated her so distant and respectful, it ain't nobody's busines s'pose."

"And what does your sister Kitty and Miss Armstron what do *they* think about sech goin's on?"

"Think? Why, they think the same's the rest on us, I t it, and mind their own business." And Luke began to w slowly homewards. Mr. Pangburn was not unobservant of flush on his companion's face and the tremor in his voice dur this little discussion. But, partly to satisfy his curiosity, partly from a love of small mischief, in which he sometimes dulged, he essayed to resolve his doubts into certainty. walked along in a reflective manner for a while, and then sa "Gals is allers kind o' risky when they're much with young lers who talk 'bout books, and poetry, and sech things. Th was a gal named Amandy Tomkins drownded herself in a w up our way, in Utiky, 'cause a married man—a dreadful tal moony kind of a cuss—come round her in this same fashi pretendin' to be single, and blowin' off steam 'bout pomes a sympathetic souls, and all this 'ere entanglin' sawder they go for, when they know reg'lar courtin' ain't down in the bill."

"You don't mean," said Luke, turning quite pale and com to a halt, "You don't mean that Mary Anne's the gurl, even Hugh Gifford was the man, to——"

"I don't mean nuthin'," replied Mr. Pangburn, reassuring for he saw rather an ominous look in Luke's eye, "I don't m nuthin' that's wrong. Only, if I was the gal's father, or broth or was interested in her in any way, I'd think prevention w better than cure, that's all. She's an awful nice gal," he cont ued, by way of additional mollification, "and I think she j takes the rag off any she critter in the diggin's."

Luke made no reply, but walked on, buried in abstracti The conversation had kindled thoughts which were most pain to him. Even against the warnings of his more sensible s he had suffered the dangerous beauty of Marian to gain a se ous influence over his heart. He knew full well his own d ciencies, for he was as free from conceit as he was honest a simple-minded; but he had sometimes, especially since th were growing richer, indulged in the dream that, after all, p and homeless as was Marian, and living as they were in a so

by where deficiencies of culture would be least perceived or ast missed—the dream that she might overlook all that, and accept the protection of his name and stalwart arm. He had not ked her manifest partiality for Gifford's society; but, partly rom diffidence and partly from good nature, he had never more han faintly indicated such a thing. Besides, he knew of Hugh's ngagement; and, moreover, his nature was not narrow enough o be lightly jealous. But now new thoughts had entered his nind—thoughts of apprehension and dismay—thoughts which led him to consider whether it was not a duty, somehow, to put Marian on her guard, even if apprehension should prove to be groundless. Even the wisest may sometimes be misled, and perhaps both the young girl and Hugh were going idly astray, merely for the want of some friendly and judicious warning. That such a warning would be given, if given at all, in the interest of his own even to himself scarce half-avowed hopes, Luke was well aware; but he was too unsophisticated to think of hesitating in what he once believed to be a duty, simply because of the risk of misconstruction.

Whether Mr. Pangburn had contemplated such a result as the product of his invidious suggestions; whether he was impelled by curiosity, mere idle malice, or real dislike of the cool and distant manner wherewith Gifford always had treated him; or whether he was merely animated by the wish to pursue his studies in human nature, certain it is that his words had produced considerable effect upon the mind of Luke Armstrong; sufficient, at all events, to hasten an explanation which that young man had often longingly contemplated, but which appeared to have required some extraordinary stimulus before it could be brought about.

While this scene was passing between Luke and Zelotes, the letters which had arrived furnished occasion for an important explanation between Marian and Gifford. She had often said that her stay on the Bar would only last until midsummer—a period which she had fixed as likely to bring information which would seriously affect her whole future prospects. When Marian first sought the protection of Seth Armstrong, her paramount impulse was to fly—to find safety wherever it might be; nd her idea of sustaining herself as a teacher or governess ocurred very naturally afterwards. But at that time, in the absence f families, and in the heat and hurry of the race for lucre, here seemed little or no demand for such services as she could ford, and such attempts as she had made by advertising in the an Francisco newspapers had hitherto proved unavailing. On

this the Armstrongs had pressed Marian to remain permanentl among them, and she had so far consented as to agree to sta until midsummer—a consent, however, which was based on step which she had previously resolved to take. In the hurr of her flight she had scarcely thought of a person to whom he thoughts were now directed as to one who might naturally b her counsel and guide: this was a very old friend of her father's a man somewhat his senior, long settled as a lawyer at Ne Orleans. This gentleman usually spent the summer at th North, and, knowing the address of his agent at New York Marian had now written to him describing her situation, an soliciting his help to put her in a way to earn her bread some where in the Northern States. To this letter Luke had no handed her a reply. It was from the agent in question, an stated that Mr. Rivingstone had sailed for Europe some month before, to be absent for two years; but that the letter of Mi Rooke had been forwarded, and would be certain to reach hi in due course. Such was the explanation which Marian no made to Gifford, adding thereto a statement of her resoluti not to outstay the time originally fixed for her departure, but t set out at furthest by the middle of July to seek employment i San Francisco.

CHAPTER X.

Gold-getting was the vital action of the drama, the brigh finale to every dream of the little world at Armstrong's Bar but, like the drama and the dream of the Midsummer Night, i included several actions, and linked together many and conflict ing aspirations. All worked regularly and zealously enough fo the common end; but their days were not all of quietness, no were all their paths of peace. There were at intervals dire con flicts touching matters of polity and society between Dr. Lan dale and Mr. Pangburn—two opposing stars who could not b in the same sphere without many a perturbation and ominou collision. In such encounters the Doctor must be adjudged t have had the best of it so far as scientific, statistical, and juris prudential knowledge were concerned; but even such consider able advantages did not always, in the general esteem, secure conclusive victory against the soaring eloquence and blistering

sarcasm of his opponent. The latter, as might occasionally have been gathered from his ordinary discourse, had been enabled by some dramatic experience to make up after a fashion his general cloudiness on other subjects of polite letters. By some mysterious chance in his erratic career he had been for a short time a theatrical critic or reporter for a western newspaper; and having naturally a retentive memory, and an imagination readily impressed by the swelling diction of the class of plays most favored of occidental taste, he frequently drew upon this resource to eke out his own flowery periods. This, indeed, with a certain rough facility in catching fragments of popular verse, and in using the extraordinary slang so current with the inferior press —the hackneyed commonplaces about political subjects which rest upon the ear, and not upon the sense—his familiarity with a certain oratorical class-book known as "The American Speaker," together with his close acquaintance with the world as he had seen it, constituted the sum total of the weapons in Mr. Pangburn's intellectual armory; but it could not fairly be denied that he used them with adroitness and effect. The Doctor, who, like many of his countrymen, exhibited an odd union of crabbedness and good-nature, often found his adversary so interesting as a psychological study as to quite disarm his animosity—a result which Zelotes very promptly and very naturally would attribute to his own controversial superiority.

"I kerry too many guns," he asserted, with his derisive leer; "I kerry too many guns for any o' these 'ere Britishers to stand afore. I jest pint 'em, I do, and tech 'em off, loaded to the muzzle with the principles of our glorious constitution rammed daown with the pole of liberty; and afore the smoke hists, the bloated advocates of tyranny has left, and kin be heerd of from up a tree. *Sic semper aristercrats!* is the sentiments of Z. Pangburn, and the more they hev' to do with him the sicker they'll be."

"Stuff and nonsense," growled the Doctor. "You Yankees will never learn that your constitution owes all that is good in it, and your country too, to the mother-land. As to the rebellion, it was an English rebellion against an un-English principle. Because George the Third and his ministers violated the principle of their own country—no taxation without representation—and your ancestors fought for and vindicated that principle, you think your constitution and your government, both copied from the old models, are antagonistic to the English ones. Trash, sir, which every Yankee schoolboy ought to see through, and would, if you didn't fence them in and shut out

the light by mountains of twaddle about tyranny and liberty, and rotten old despotisms, and the like. Let them read Chatham's speeches, or even Burgoyne's, for that matter, when he came to seek laurels in the forum he had lost in the field, and learn a bit of sense on the other side."

"There ain't no sense," retorted Zelotes, "nor yit no justice to be got out o' the minions of despots; and, as to our constitution, it was made up bran new and slick to order by T. Jefferson and A. Hamilton. If there's been any hookin' of idees, it's been on your side, 'cause a selfish and corrupt aristocracy got skeered by the fierce haowls of a daown-trodden people. We air a curus people, and our idees is all of hum manufactur'. We air strong and vigorous, and we call no man master. We are young, but peert; and we don't go hautboying about for other folks' notions, when we kin git 'em, as easy as rollin' off a log, out o' the mint and coinage of our brains."

"There's nothing in your laws, your government, or your constitution," said the Doctor, stubbornly, "which is worth a fig for the happiness of mankind that Englishmen did not make perfect, assert, fight for, and die for, before Jefferson or Hamilton were born. And as for your youth, if there's any merit in it, you are as old a nation as the English, if not as old in America as they are in England. Crossing the ocean doesn't make a man younger, neither does it a people." *

"It makes him spryer and 'cuter," contended Mr. Pangburn, "and shows him a heap o' things he never heerd of, and generally enlarges the field of his intellectooal vision. It teaches him to shake off them 'ere degradin' superstitions and worm-eaten customs of the old world, which priests and lords air tryin' to keep a goin', so's to save their hides and plunder, long arter the spirit of the age has called with a loud voice that it was time they went under. It teaches him that all mankind are equal by nateral right, and that distinctions that makes 'em different is the unnateral humbug of them that wants to set themselves up above their feller critters. It teaches him that we air the Ark of Safety, the Hum of Freedom, and the Haven of the Oppressed.'

"There's good here, certainly," went on the Doctor, "as well as bad. But the good is nearly all English, and the bad you've invented among yourselves. There's no particular merit in developing the resources of a vast rich country—resources

* The Doctor had, apparently, read Mr. Lander's "Imaginary Conversations."

which would almost develop themselves; and you've no right to credit for greatness of national character until the nation has been exposed to and has resisted temptation; until she's made sacrifices for the sake of right and a pure reputation, which prove the capacity and high-mindedness of her people. For all your good cause, the military strength of England would have overwhelmed you, had she not been set upon at the same time by nearly every nation in Christendom. The matter was well managed, but you wouldn't have carried the point single-handed. America had then, as she has had always, prodigious good luck, and her sons have gone about the world ever since praising themselves for a result for which they ought to give at least equal credit to Fortune."

"We don't give no credick to nobody," demurred Zelotes, "nor nuthin' else, where we don't git nuthin' in return. We air the architecks of our own fortin', we air, and we don't want nobody to teach us how to build. And as to other nations, we kin lick your'n and them too, and we ain't over pettikilar when we begin. We've done it twice, and we kin do it agin."

"You'd better not try it," quoth the Doctor, waxing wroth; "at least not when we're not fighting half the world beside. But I dare say you Yankees will be shrewd enough to pick your time."

"We do everythink on business principles," exclaimed Mr Pangburn, winking and grinning with sardonic joy at the other's anger. "If we kin bring both arms agen' your one, we'll do it, sure enough; but then it is our praoud boast that we kin lick ye with one hand all the same. The Stars and Stripes is good agen' the world, they air; and they kiver twenty-five millions of freemen."

"And how many slaves? How many stripes cover them? If your system were far better, far more enlightening than it is, those poor creatures' wrongs would suffice to darken it."

"Darken it? Darken that air banner? Do the spots darken the sun? Does a shootin' star spile the glory of the skies? Does a black sheep set back a hull flock any? I reckon not. Who fetched the niggers here? No Yankee or Yankee government, was it? 'Think on my chains? How came they on me?' 'Beware my vengeance!' 'Kin it more than kill?' 'And is not that enough?' 'No, not enough; it cannot take away the grace of life, the comeliness of look which virtue gives; it cannot lay its hand on these no more than it kin shoot agen' the sun!'"*

*Excerpt from Sheridan Knowles's "William Tell."

"I don't see the force of the argu——"

"'When Freedom from her mounting height
Unfurled her standard to the air,
She tore the azoor robe of night,
And set the stars of glory there.'

"That's so!"

"But permit me to say——"

"'There's a fierce gray bird with a bendin' beak,
With an angry eye and a startlin' shriek,
That nurses her brood where the cliff flowers blow
On the precipice top in perpetooal snow.'

"That air a fact!"

"But slavery surely is——"

"'Stand! the ground's yer own, mer braves!
Will ye give it up to slaves?'

"——a grievous wrong and an infamous disgrace. A stain which, until wiped out, will always disgrace your flag"

"'Nail to the mast that tattered flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightnin' and the gale!'"

At some such point as this the Doctor would usually give up the argument, and the scene would conclude with a grand stump-speech from the florid Pangburn, by this time in a high state of patriotic fervor and poetic exaltation. It was not remarkable that so ingenious a politician should always adopt the plan suggested in the foregoing colloquy; that is to say, the plan of becoming lofty and obscure, not to say inconsequential, on getting into logical difficulties, or on being confronted with arguments he was unable or unwilling to refute. "The man's mad," the Doctor confidently assured me, "stark staring mad, and not worth talking to at all except in a professional way, to watch the progress of the disease. Your half-educated Yankee is the most impracticable of animals for believing in nothing he can't see, and trusting in nothing he doesn't understand. Look at that man, Railes; I firmly believe he thought my theodolite was a toy, until he saw we really got with it the difference of level between the river and the cañon. *That* was something tangible, and I

hink you might now persuade him that the instrument could hrow a cannon ball to the moon. This Editor of ours, with his Clarion and his Bedlamite spouting, is quite persuaded his coun- ry could take the whole world in hand to-morrow, and parcel it ut like another Roman Empire. Luck and security, sir, will be he ruin of your people if they don't have some big, bouncing piece of misfortune to teach them common sense."

As I was of much the same way of thinking, the Doctor and I did not quarrel, although I had the pleasure of assisting at several of his encounters with his eccentric opponent. It may be well, before proceeding further, to explain how it was that I became personally interested in the diggings on Armstrong's Bar. The original object of my coming has been before mentioned as being that of determining the proper bounds and metes of a large tract of land, claimed under an ancient Spanish deed, whose holders had deputed me to act in their behalf. The data in my possession were such as to satisfy me very early respecting the extent of at least one boundary of the claim. This was on the river, and undoubtedly included the ground covered by the little settlement as well as their newly discovered gold-field in the interior. In the existing state of the country, however, a direct attempt to oust actual settlers was a critical and often an unsuccessful affair, and there were certain moot points to be resolved as to title, which would make such an attempt a very unwise one in this instance. This being the case, I did, as I thought, the safest thing for my principals, by first exhibiting the strength of their claim to the Armstrong company, and subsequently entering into an agreement with them to forego any proceeding for the space of one year, subject to renewal, and without prejudice to the real or supposed rights of either party, on condition of receiving a clear eighth of the gold they might gain from the soil. It was not without some discussion that this conclusion was reached, nor altogether without pugnacious and litigious propositions on the part of Pangburn. But as it was clear that the claimants I represented could put the company to great inconvenience and expense, if not force them to desist working on the claim altogether, prudence overcame all other emotions, and the arrangement proposed was quietly adopted.

CHAPTER XI.

It was a soft, balmy evening in June, a ribbon or two of fa ing fire in the west showing where the sun had gone dow while in his place the moon was riding up the firmament in m jestic yet chastened splendor. The day had been hot, and light breeze which rustled about and scattered the delicate od of blossoms whose parent vines clambered around the cabin, w all the more grateful for the close air which it disturbed. Tl same delicate odors which first told me that feminine car must have been busy here, still survived the burning heat of tl sun; for the river was close by, and the fingers which had plante were careful to sustain with daily refreshment the thirsty stra gers which otherwise would have drooped and withered.

Several of the party—and the Doctor and Hugh Gifford we among them—had been absent since early morning. They ha set forth at daybreak for the saw-mill, some thirty miles off, an would return late at night. Work had gone on as usual in th cañon, and those who remained behind, having finished thei labor and partaken of their evening meal, were chatting an smoking and reckoning the gains of the day. Pretty Kitty wa sitting at one end of the porch listening—I fear not unwillingl —to the uncouth worshippings of Dick Railes. Her mothe was sitting quietly within, reading her Bible, the usual occupa tion of her leisure moments. Ichabod was employed in elaborat ing some new ornament for his capricious head-gear, and Lio lay near by gazing with solemn intentness on the last red co of the smouldering fire.

As for Marian, she stood at the door looking up as intentl at the radiant heavens, and wondering, as most of us so ofte wonder, whether those mysterious and innumerable orbs coul be peopled by beings like ourselves. She was brought back t earth by a low, pleading voice; a voice which, notwithstandin its accent, was not without music; a voice, however, whic even had it been dissonant, might have grown melodious wh laden with the fulness of the heart whence it came. The wor were simple enough:

"You're not very busy, just now, Mary Anne?"

"Busy! No, indeed, as idle as indolence and this love evening can make me."

"You wouldn't mind"—and the voice was very low, alm

cautious—"you wouldn't mind walking a few steps with me on the river-bank—where—where you often walk with Mr. Gifford?"

"Mind, Luke? Thank you, I shall be glad of a little stroll. Indeed, I was only thinking of going there just now. It is a favorite walk of mine."

"I know it is."

They walked gently down the little lawn which trended to the stream, and turned into the path long worn smooth by footsteps along its bank. The water swam along in flecks and patches of black and silver as the shadows fell or the moonbeams danced upon the tiny ripples. Higher and higher sailed the moon, and her light grew stronger until it seemed almost like the light of day. Some minutes passed of turning and returning—for the slopes and the shrubbery made a promenade of a hundred yards or so most convenient—and Luke spoke never a word. In truth, the poor fellow felt that he was somehow approaching the most momentous crisis of his life, and even the first accents wherein his thoughts should shape themselves into expression became of exaggerated importance. He was naturally shy, too, and a nervous feeling of self-depreciation, a keener than common sense of his deficiencies, crept over him and added to his embarrassment. But he had watched sedulously for this opportunity—watched for it with not a little of the cool, steadfast perseverance of his countrymen—and he must not let it slip by unimproved. The words came at last, but they were slow and hesitating:

"I jest wanted to say a few words to you, Mary Anne."

"Yes, Luke."

I wonder if any woman is ever altogether unconscious of the admiration she excites, that is, supposing her to be in daily contact with her admirer? It is doubtful; but if ever a woman was so unconscious, it was Marian now. Next her heart she carried a little Testament, which had been some months before the means of revealing Luke's secret to Hugh Gifford. Others might now and then have guessed it, albeit for an untutored, Luke was not a demonstrative man. But of all who ever thought of such a thing, Marian herself would have been the last. Still, when a young man asks a young woman to a moonlight walk, and, after a preface of solemn silence, begins to unfold his mind in terms such as Luke set forth with, there are few over whom would not flash a suspicion of what was to follow. Marian was not of the few; but she did not get her suspicion from what she remembered of Luke's words and tones in the past; it was

begotten of what she recalled of Hugh Gifford's looks and tone when they referred to Luke. As she thought of these, came another remark, or rather a question, which seemed somewhat irrelevant:

"Mary Anne, you're fond of sister Kitty, ain't you?"

"What a question! Why, you know, Luke, she is *my* sister too. She has been always kind, and considerate, and affectionate. People who are left alone appreciate these things."

"Left alone?"

"Without friends—relatives, I mean. You know I am quite alone in the world."

"I knew you had no father or mother, Mary Anne," said Luke, gently.

"Neither father nor mother, sister nor brother; so that I think much of those who have made me half forget my loneliness. Of course I'm fond of Kitty. But then she is a good girl besides—a good daughter, dutiful and obedient—a girl of a frank, cordial nature, which would make me love her for herself even if she had not been so very kind to me."

"Then I s'pose, Mary Anne, if you saw Kitty in any kind of trouble, in any kind of danger, you'd try to help—to save her?"

"To be sure I should."

"If you saw her wanderin' along a bank all covered with things that was bright and beautiful—nice trees, and sparklin' brooks, and tumblin' waterfalls, full of singing birds and sweet smelling flowers, a place where she seemed to be happy as the day is long—you'd think it was kind o' sinful to disturb her there, wouldn't you?"

"And so it would be," acquiesced the girl, half smiling at Luke's unwonted poetry.

"But if you knew that over agen' the bank—always yawnin' always threatenin', ready at any moment to swallow her up and destroy her, whenever chance or temptation should git her to make a single false step—if you knew that right agen' the bank was a deep, black, horrid precipice, which, if she went over it would crush her, ruin her for ever, now and hereafter—then you'd think you'd oughter take the risk of givin' her pain to save the greater risk of her destruction, wouldn't you, Mary Anne?"

"I should. I suppose most of us are at some time or another placed in a position where duty requires us to make such a choice. But this is mere laughing, surely. Dear Kitty can be in no such straits. You surely do not mean——"

"I don't mean that Kitty is in any danger. What I meant was only in example-like—allygurry—what mother is so often quoting from Scriptur', takin' one person's case to try on to another."

"And which of our little company is in a plight so critical?"

"I don't know for certain as any one is; but if I think so——"

"If you think so, you would say, you ought to put them on their guard?"

"That is jest what I would say."

"And I quite agree with you."

"You do?"

"Perfectly."

"But it ain't always easy to do such a thing. Even the kindest folks are sometimes hurt if one seems to meddle too much with their private affairs. It's hard to run the chance of hurtin' anybody's feelin's."

"No sensible person would be displeased at what must certainly be seen to be kindly meant. It would be a duty to incur such a risk as well as the other."

"You think so?"

"Unquestionably."

"I don't want to shrink from doin' a duty; and I think I'll hev' to do it."

"There is, then, a person here in the position you describe?"

"I said I only thought so, Mary Anne; and you said, if I thought so, I'd ought to put 'em on their guard."

"Well?"

"And I thought as much before; only I was glad to hear you say so, because the person——"

"Stop a moment, Luke. It may be quite correct that you should warn the person most interested, but it might not be altogether right that you should previously intrust the secret to another; you might be mistaken, and——"

"That's jest what I thought, that's jest what I hoped, Mary Anne; and that's the reason why I spoke first about it to you. Heaven knows if I was mistaken how happy 'twould make me!"

"But how can I tell?"

"That's jest it, Mary Anne; you are the only one who *can* tell."

"The only one who can tell!"

"Yes; because this loved one wanderin' on the bank, this unsuspectin' one who's yit in such dreadful peril—as I think, mind—is——"

"Well, this person is——"

"This person is *you*, Mary Anne."

"Me!" cried Marian, in astonishmen

It had been very, very difficult for Luke to get thus far. separate clauses of the little artifice, whereby he had led u the critical accusation, had cost him a world of doubt, bewil ment, and embarrassment. But having accomplished this cate step—having crossed his Rubicon—he cast restraint to winds, and said what he had to say with all the blunt manli of which he was capable:

"I know there weren't a soul of us who crossed the plain for you to associate with except Hugh Gifford; I know eddicated and refined, and full of book learnin', and that weren't brought up to mix with poor farmin' folks like us. was always thoughtful, and too good to let any one see know'd such a thing; but it's true for all that. And I kr that Mr. Gifford's got a gift of talk, and, when he likes, he carry you away with him to Chiny, or to Europe, and put in all kinds of beautiful places, and hang 'em round with manner of enticin' and lovely colors! It was nateral you'd his company, and that he'd like yourn. But don't be ang Mary Anne, if I say there might be danger both of you mi learn to like it too well, when it's remembered he's an enga man! There might be danger both of you would forget t and both be sorry for it ever after! Don't be hurt if I thou this was a precipice you might fall into; you have said yours you know, that no one could be displeased at what must be s to be kindly meant!"

Marian was taken very much by surprise. Her bosom heav and the rich color came and went in her face in a manner v ble even by the moonlight—in a manner which, to some, wo have been conclusive evidence of deeper feeling than even speaker's words would seem to imply. She was taken by s prise, and, as people often do in such cases, she spoke, whe pause occurred, in a mechanical sort of way, her thoughts while busy within, her voice somewhat changed, and her somewhat averted:

"Mr. Gifford and I are good friends—no more. You m kindly, Luke, and I am not displeased. But it seems stra that neither your mother nor your sister should ever have allu to a subject which, if it were so marked and obvious, wo are usually first to mention."

"Ah, they could not see with my eyes!"

"With your eyes, Luke?"

"No; I can't keep back the words, if I choke in speaking them. They couldn't see with my eyes, Mary Anne; how should they? They were fond of you, and glad to see you pleased and happy, and there an end. But I—I—*loved* you; and where they had no thought of danger I could see a hundred. I know, I'm sure, you can't, with your self-respect and your learnin', go to fall in love with a man that's engaged! Why, he's the same as married! Wuss, perhaps, for they say the first bloom of love is what is most wicked to steal. P'raps that's what makes me feel as I do feel. Surely one woman's enough for one man! We're not livin' among the Mormons, and——"

"Luke!"

"Forgive me! Think it unsaid, Mary Anne, for I know I had no right to say it. For you've told me, haven't you, that Mr. Gifford and you are good friends and nothin' more! That's all I want to know—more'n I had a right to ask. See, Mary Anne. I know I'm dreadful low and mean, compared with what you are! I know I ain't worthy of you. But I couldn't live nigh you, not within sound of your voice, without bein' a better man; I'm better for it even now. We're gettin' richer, you know, Mary Anne; and we'll soon have a better house, and p'raps a piano and books, and you know you love this place! And you have neither father nor mother, nor sister nor brother, and you can have 'em all here—all, if you'll only say that you'll let us love and cherish you."

"Luke," said Marian, in slow, measured, but sorrowful accents, "Luke—good, kind Luke, forget all that you have said to me this night. As to Mr. Gifford, I thought you knew, as your father and mother know, that I am going—going, almost directly, far away. It was never intended, you know, never proposed, that I should stay here always; only until other arrangements were made. Those other arrangements *are* made. I depart, therefore, now—almost immediately."

"If you knew how I'd work—if you knew how I'd slave—to please you, to make you happy; if you would only try—I know well you don't love me now, but oh! don't, don't throw away the chance of a happy life—don't, I pray, I beseech you—without at least thinkin' over it a little; don't do what 'll make me so, so very wretched!"

He turned his handsome, sunny face toward Marian as he spoke, and she saw in the bright light how deep was the meaning of his words. The face was sunny no longer though, but very pale, the mouth was set, and the eyes were brimming with tears.

"I must have been wrong," said Marian painfully, "wron not to have seen or guessed something of this before. Indeed indeed, Luke, what you propose can never be. If you woul have me feel kindly towards you—if you would not drive m away from this roof, prematurely, in sorrow and in pain, neve again speak to me of this subject. I feel grateful—nay, more, feel affectionate towards you for all your kindness, for even th service you thought to render me to-night; but you must not—indeed you must not—ask more. As to the differences yo speak of, they are nothing; but of love, such love as you woul seek, I have none—none to bestow. Won't you let things g on in the same old way, Luke? Won't you let me think of yo still as a brother?"

He turned away from her as she ended, and the two walked up and down the river path several times in silence. Marian saw that Luke was struggling manfully with himself, and she said no more until he found words to reply:

"*He* is—will be—no more than a good friend to you?"

"No more! He is no more—no more can he ever be!"

She held forth her hand as she spoke, as if to close the conversation with such a sign of friendship and of confidence; and Luke, bending low over her hand, for the first time kissed it; and he left, for the kiss he took, the first tears he had shed since he was a little child.

CHAPTER XII.

THE weeks were flying swiftly by, and every one brought its share of the yellow earth all were striving for. Each Saturday night, when they came together and unlocked and augmented their treasure, the miners of Armstrong's Bar saw themselves growing richer and richer, while their fears of the cañon "giving out" grew more and more remote and feeble. There was talk now of building another flume, but stories were rife of diggings like these running short in the most sudden and mysterious manner, and the prudent plan of letting well enough alone was wisely adhered to.

It is a strange circumstance, which those who have been in the golden lands will readily verify, that, although time seems to fly so swiftly in them, it always appears long in the retrospect The excitement of unwonted gains, the novelty of the scenery

the perpetual bustle, the omnipresence of that rosy, alluring figure of hope, make the hours glide fast no doubt; but why, when past, should they appear so long? Perhaps it is that the wealth procured is compared instinctively with the space consumed in its acquisition, and, reasoning from previous experience, the mind extends that space to make it consistent with the parallels suggested by memory. When a man gets a thousand dollars in a week who never before earned more than that sum in a year, he naturally feels that more than seven little days must surely have gone by in getting it.

With our little party labor went on steadily, and no mischance occurred to interrupt or diminish its income. There were aching hearts on the Bar no doubt; but their pain did not spring from the absence of gold, nor did it extend to the company at large. On the contrary, matters seemed to the others eminently buoyant and gay; and never in particular did Mr. Pangburn appear to better advantage. He laughed and joked and told grotesque Yankee stories from morn till dewy eve. Nothing could exceed the good spirits which our golden shower brought to the active editor. He even made friends with Ike and Lion; neither of whom were swift in vouchsafing their confidence, and who had regarded Zelotes with protracted suspicion. For my part I must say, in all honesty, that I never saw any one bear prosperity so well. Some are made crusty, presuming, unsocial by the gifts of fortune; but the reverse was distinctly their effect upon the eccentric nature of Pangburn.

The sweet breath of Spring had come and gone, the brightly beautiful June—a month so charming here—had been enjoyed, and had likewise fled, and we were far into July. It was well for us we were so near a stream, for the season, always dry, promised this summer to be parching in the extreme. The rains which had been so bountiful were sucked from the soil by the thirsty sun; the rivers slowly narrowed until there was scarcely water even in the mountain springs to feed their sluggish course. Our works, however, stood us in good stead; our supply of the precious fluid was exceptionally abundant; and we could look forward to the droughts of August and September without dismay, for the doctor had invented and perfected an ingenious system of force pumps, which promised to keep the flume running when all other devices might haply fail.

Marian was subjected to a heavy cross fire of entreaties to rescind her determination as the time fixed for her departure drew near. Luke said no more, for he had passed his word; yet there was now and then a pleading look in his saddened blue

eyes, which told quite as much as his tongue could have possibly uttered. But his father, mother and sister were by no means silent, for they plied the poor girl ceaselessly with objections to her going, and affectionate persuasions that she should remain. Such a thing was, however, quite out of the question. Marian saw plainly that after making all allowance for any peculiar animus in Luke's strictures touching her position with regard to Gifford, there was a residum of justice and propriety about them which made separation quite essential to her self-respect. The situation had been a singular one, and, isolated as they were, it was easy to suggest excuses for educated people who found pleasure in each other's society; but when once such a thing was marked enough to excite comment, it was time to bring it to a close. When the girl looked into her heart, too, and found how painful this impending close was like to be, she was more than ever persuaded of its strict necessity. Marian was impulsive, truly, but her nature was eminently conscientious. She had never yet, to her knowledge, wronged man or woman; and she would not begin by wronging Virginia Chester.

As to Gifford himself, he strove long and earnestly in his quiet, stubborn way, against her departure. The idea of utter separation—a separation which was almost certain to be an eternal one—filled him with consternation and dismay. Without contemplating any wrong to his affianced bride, he was yet bitterly averse to being parted from what was a continual temptation to commit it. He knew very well the force of this temptation; but he pushed it away from his immediate thoughts, and wished to glide on in the old course, that the coming months might be similar to the ones just passed. It is needless to say that he was more selfish than Marian; that is obvious enough; but his selfishness by no means went the length of dreaming to entrap her affections, situated as they both were. He was too manly for that; but he thought they might continue in the way they had been indefinitely, without any assignable limit, and without the intervention of any disagreeable observation or explanation; and seeing no reason for her going, excepting that which she advanced, namely, her resolve to be independent and at work, he strove against it by every argument in his power.

And so he might have continued to strive but for the altered demeanor of Luke. The alteration was not so marked as to excite any general comment; but Gifford knew in his heart of hearts that the kind-souled young rustic was Marian's secret worshipper. When he found Luke's laugh was becoming less frequent—when he saw the broad smile which formerly lighted

uke's face replaced by an expression of patient sorrow, Hugh egan to ask himself mental questions, and was not long in uessing at something like the truth. Arrived at this, his wishes xperienced a radical change. He had no right to be jealous, nd he knew it. But he had a strange dread of the effect upon Iarian's generous nature, which the sight of poor Luke's simple distress might bring about. Many a woman before her time had been melted by pity to concessions which would never have been wrought by love; and Hugh, with all his faults, was not coxcomb enough to suspect that there existed in himself an insurmountable barrier to such a thing in the present instance.

After awhile, therefore, he ceased to oppose her departure; and even spoke of it more than once as a desirable and necessary step, in such a way as by no means to please Marian herself. She was truly grieved at the idea of her absence inflicting any pain upon Luke Armstrong; but she was far from gratified to be taught that it could be regarded with complacency by Hugh Gifford. Such an inconsistency told a tale unfavorable to her future peace, as she well knew; but absence feels and conquers much, and Marian was not yet old enough to have learned to distrust its efficacy. She felt that it was high time she were gone, and believed she was glad that the hour of departure was so close at hand.

The weeks had flown by, and the treasure-chest had filled and filled until it now contained a sum of more than eighty thousand dollars; and Gifford had for his share, as Marian reminded him, more than the sum which John Chester had named as, in a manner, the price of his bride. Each Saturday night the chest had been opened, and its contents exhibited and augmented, and it had been resolved that, as soon as they turned what Mr. Pangburn called the lucky corner of a hundred thousand dollars, their hoard should be taken down to San Francisco, there to be deposited with some safe banking-house. Indeed, such a step might have been most prudent before it had increased to its present proportions. But this happened to be a period when many bankers had stopped payment, and general distrust prevailed, even as to making what were called special deposits. On the other hand, gold robberies had been very few in the mines. It seemed a safer speculation to try and rifle the generous earth than one's neighbors; the former cost no terrors save those of hard work, while the latter tempted the terribly summary ones of Judge Lynch.

The Rothschilds had lately sent an accredited agent to the city, whose fame was now reaching across the sea, and it was

determined that the capital of Armstrong's Bar might safely b intrusted to Mr. Davidson.

"Another sech week as this," said Seth, one Saturday nigh "and we'll send the stuff down the river."

"And another sech a six months," exulted Mr. Pangburn "and we kin see a loomin' up the stun front block in Utiky and the cottage on the what's-his-name, and book-learnin', an the v'yage to Europe, and the old farm at Saybrook, and all th rest on't; includin' a wood roof instead of a cotting one, an Miss Armstrong's chiny!"

"But I'm afeard," continued Seth, "I'm afeard about bein too san*guine*. We air in luck, that's a fact; but luck like our's is dreadful apt to break off short, as suddint as it begun. Thi week's been good, dreadful good; but there's looks about th cañon which I've heerd old miners tell on, when diggin's i nigh to giv' aout."

"Show!" said Zelotes, uneasily. "D'ye think so, now?"

"Sartain; there's looks; but then agin, looks is jest as lik as not to be deceivin', and we came first to the river bank in stead of the cañon."

"It's run in my head all along," remarked Dick Railes, "tha we'd struck the likeliest part o' the place at the fust go off; bu I didn't see no call to talk blue when we was doin' so well; an arter the Doctor's pintin' the th'odolite up and down the gulc sech a heap o' times, I tho't it oughter fetch the gold there i anything would."

"As to that," quoth the Doctor, "levelling rods may be bet ter than divining ones, but they only teach us the way to th gold, not the gold the way to us. I think myself that what we'v taken so far has been in a sort of pocket, lower than the be runs elsewhere. It is quite likely, then, that the spot may b the richest in the channel; but we can only tell when we try."

These prognostications were agreeable to none, but they ap peared especially disquieting to Mr. Pangburn. "Not," h said, "but what it's easy enough to strike new leads; but whe I've put folks on a good thing, I like folks to find it a goo thing." Pangburn's pride, if not his honor, bein' bound up i the issoo, it siles his dander to hev' it tech bottom. However, he added, reassuringly, "there's been some 'cute things printe lately in the 'Frisky papers on all these pints, gulch, dry, sur face diggin', and bar, and even 'bout grindin' the stuff out o rotten-stun'; which latter seems a peert style o' gold-mining *Now I've got* to go down Monday or Tuesday to see 'bout th '*Mounting* Clarion,' and stimerlate Eli S. some; and I reckon

est keep on to 'Frisky and git posted on the new dodges; nuch as failin' wages is leaden servitors to dull delay, like- Fortin' allers helps them as helps theirselves."

Vith this sage maxim and prophetic corollary, the editor of Clarion betook himself to a seat in a distant corner, where. a a flour barrel for a desk, he was in the habit of inditing t he termed editorial articles for the flourishing periodical ontrolled.

The Monday came and saw Mr. Pangburn safe on his way, at- ded by the good wishes of all, or nearly all; for if the truth t be told, there were a few of the party who could not over- ne, and could scarcely conceal their aversion from the man. had, however, taken great pains of late to make himself reeable, and on the intervening Sunday before his departure he made a successful bid for popularity with the ladies, by de- ing and carrying out a scheme for a quiet pic-nic at the cañon, order that they might see and admire the romantic scenery ich environed the spot whence so much wealth was flowing to the general coffers. And each of the ladies had washed out mall portion of the precious metal, which Zelotes had insisted on their keeping for themselves; and he capped the climax of gallantry by riding clear back to the Bar, where Ike and im had remained in charge, to fetch Mrs. Armstrong's knit- g, which she had forgotten, and was always uncomfortable to long without.

Mr. Pangburn was gone then, bearing many good wishes, but would bring them back in a few days, so that his departure used little sorrow. Not so as regarded the departure of arian, an event which was to take place on the Monday next llowing. Bitter were the lamentations of Kitty, who was ns to be deprived not only of a kind friend but of a teacher ho had been of inestimable service to her. Many were the re- onstrances of Mrs. Armstrong, who really loved Marian, and ho was persuaded that men in San Francisco added to the al criminal disregard of their sex to the claims of patchwork d chiny, the most shocking depravity that could be imagined, d that, more particularly with reference to lovely and unpro- cted young women, they went about like roaring lions seeking hat they might devour. Seth for his part grieved more than e cared to show over the coming separation. Since the girl d appealed to him at St. Louis for aid and protection, he had own to feel more and more like a father toward her; and to t from her now seemed like the snapping of a natural tie. othing could *induce him to accept* the money she strove to

force upon him in recompense for her long sojourn with the ily; he pressed it back into her delicate hands, and ho them and it together between his own horny palms, with a v not quite steady, and an eye not quite undimmed, he Marian promise to return should she not find a situation should she for any reason hereafter require a home.

And Marian and Hugh wandered for the last time among favorite walks, up and down the path by the river, up to a around the lovely little lake that lay perched among the Again they sat on the velvet turf, and again gazed into the cid waters, and watched the shadows of the silent trees. once more did the girl breathe into her companion's unquie feverish spirit something of her own; so much more lofty much more calm. It was well, perhaps, that all this was so end, for from the habit of giving and receiving comfort, stre solace, grows something which, if not altogether love, bec a more indispensable necessity.

Strangely enough, during the first few days of that week yield of gold from the cañon grew smaller and smaller. many weeks before, the days had ranged from thirty to ounces and, during one week, had exceeded the latter aver but now the return sank by nearly one-half, and on the Fr the miners brought home but ten ounces. On that evenin one of the three last Marian was to spend at the Bar—Hugh spoken again in his discontented way about seeking his for elsewhere.

"I shall be sorry to think of your leaving the Armstron said Marian, "now that I am going from among them."

"You cannot suppose that the attractions here are incre by your departure," replied Gifford, looking sadly out upon river.

"Nay, I wasn't thinking of myself, but of you. I don't th you quite fit to go among strangers."

"Fit? I? who am naturally one of the most solitary of man beings?"

"You are solitary when among others, perhaps; but there few human beings, for all that, who need others more than need them."

"Your riddle, Marian?"

"Why, what is the whole story of your life as you have t it me, but the history of an unsatisfied craving for sympath You think yourself in love with solitude, only because your s is out of tune with those around you; and you people the so tude with spirits more harmonious. Is it not so?"

And will ever be, I fear," he answered gloomily.

You must *make* your future, Gifford," said Marian, earnestly, d you will not do so by indulging in idle repinings; you can- by such change your barren, whitewashed meeting-house Westminster Abbey—a change which is a type, in a man- of what were needed to satisfy you; nor can you meta- phose those who surround you into idealized creatures who ld minister to your intellectual requirements. But you can ock the gates and overleap the barriers which separate you n these and more than these. You must exert, and that right plutely, Will, Industry, Self-Denial; they will infallibly lead to Strength, Usefulness, and Power."

"Not without money, Marian. We reason ever from opposite es, I fear. You have looked upon a social condition alone, re all who have any right to be ambitious are provided with lth, as a matter of course, to begin with; I upon another. ere all may be as ambitious as they will, but for whom the y goal—the sole qualification, without which you are nothing, which you are everything—is wealth to end with."

"Get the gold to begin with, then, and press onward to some- g nobler!"

"A man is unfit for anything nobler who gets wealth by the ns he must employ to get it, and after the time the getting s cost; a gold-grubber among gold-grubbers, what is he fit after? Is there any Lethean cup whereof he may quaff and get the sordid paths he has pursued, the foul companions he consorted withal? Can he even forego the habits which, n and despicable as they generally are, must absolutely be uired and practised, the armor offensive and defensive, with- which he were at the mercy of the desperate throng with om he must needs do battle?"

"The picture is dark," said Marian with a sigh, "darker, I nk, than it need be; it must be possible to pursue such paths, herd with such companions even, and yet keep the hands n and the soul pure. The harder the task, the nobler the ievement."

"Mortals can only do what mortals may," returned Hugh; "yet now well, if I haply grow to be a better and purer man than my y and bitter experience would fain have made me, to whom merit will be justly due. But I would speak of yourself, ian—a subject on which we may agree no better, but whic rely of more immediate interest. You are going to this -born city—to San Francisco—to seek employment?"

"Surely!"

"But you have no friends there, no single acquaintance ev to attest to your accomplishments, to vouch for your character

"No; these are things which should speak for themselve

"How can they in advance? People seeking governess or teachers, always ask evidence of capacity, references."

"As to capacity, I can play, sing, speak French and Italia or sketch a little, and my employers can use their own eyes a ears to test my performances. References, truly, I have no and I must endeavor to make my way without them."

"You will be exposed to unpleasantness, to insult, perha with no one to befriend, no one to protect you!"

"Was I so exposed when I crossed the plains? Did I ha friends or protectors there?"

"Ah, that was different. Different in circumstances, i straints, common danger, family safeguards. You are goi into a new world now."

"I have no fears. They are our countrymen in San Fra cisco; I do not fear them—not, at least, in a State like th Besides, I may not remain there long. In a few weeks lette may reach me from Europe; and I may go at once to the A lantic coast."

"And we—you and I—will never see each other again!"

A slight shiver came over Marian at the words, but she tri to smile.

"What a gloomy prophecy! Why should we not? The wo is wide, to be sure, but we are both travellers, both wayfare Who shall say when we may not cross each other once more

"Marian," said the young man gravely, and with an icy e phasis that was meant to cover a fire which threatened to bu forth below, "Marian, you will promise, if you resolve to lea California, to write me—to that effect—before you are to sail

"Write to you," repeated she in some embarrassment; th with a sudden thought—"it will not be necessary; I shall wri you know, to Kitty, to Mrs. Armstrong."

"To me!" he persisted imploringly.

"It would seem unusual," hesitated Marian, "cause rema perhaps, and——"

"Your letter need not be directed here; it is not so much ask. Besides, I may be far away from this: I shall let y know if *I* depart. Won't you do as much for me?"

"Enough; I will do as you wish; only such things son times work mischief—through misconception and accident mean; and you in your turn must promise that, should I wri *you will destroy* my letter."

"Willingly, gladly."

And with such words, ending in such a pledge, the two wanered on their way, each feeling, unbeknown to the other, what ther could rightly express; each yielding, in those last few ys, to the inclination to be much with the other, and to inlge in trains of thought which constantly tempted to such exession. It was well, indeed, that all this was so soon to end. or Luke often thought so, for although he was quite incapable watching their movements, he could not help noticing that arian and Hugh were often absent, and at the same time. He ought, as most of us have thought, how hard it was that there ould be such cross purposes in the world; he consoled himlf, as most of us have done, with the reflection that his immeiate cause of suffering would soon pass away. A grievous solce, when such a cause has become to the suffering soul the ly source of joy.

Saturday night had come again. A hot stifling night, with thick air pushed sluggishly about now and then by puffs of a irocco-like wind. The last Saturday night Marian was to be here, a circumstance which clearly had its effect on the spirits of he party, for they were sometimes jocular and sometimes dessed. It seemed to be generally agreed that the occasion hould be honored as a sort of complimentary festival at leaveaking; but the cheer had an air as of funeral baked meats, the ld-fashioned provender which served as a recompense to those who came to share the gloom of a house of mourning; and it prompted melancholy retrospects rather than happy auguries.

Mr. Pangburn had not yet returned, which was not remarkable, since he had expressed his determination to go down to San Francisco. Moreover, he might have had trouble with Eli S. Barlow, as he had signified his dissatisfaction with late numbers of the "Mountain Clarion," and intimated a suspicion that his deputy had been enjoying "a leetle tech of the horrors;" which it appeared was the sole gratification which that otherwise exemplary *litterateur* occasionally allowed himself.

"Things don't look quite so bright as they did a week ago," said Seth, as he stretched his limbs wearily, and wiped the perspiration from his wrinkled brow.

"The gold *has* fell off a sight," observed Dick Railes, by way of reply.

"I weren't thinking of that," said Seth, "at least not then. We must take the good with the bad, so fur's that goes. If the week hain't paid as well as some did two months back, it's paid a heap more'n many a *week did afore* we dreamt of gittin' a speck on't *in the cañon.*"

"That air Pangburn," pursued Dick, reflectively, "is shar er'n a steel trap, he is. He allowed the color'd be thar, and was thar. He reckoned it would kind o' whittle down, and kind o' whittled down."

"It's the creature's instinct," grumbled the Doctor, with a rimony; "he finds gold as bears find honey, or as hogs fin truffles. There's no more merit in it than belongs to a houn for his nose."

"He is s'rewd," continued Dick, who appeared to be in a eu logistic mood, "he is s'rewd, Pangburn is. Thar's nigh on t a hundred thousand witnesses in that air box which will allow tha Pangburn is s'rewd."

"I'm sure he's dreadful good-natered," remarked Mrs. Arm strong, blinking over her spectacles from the corner, "not for gettin' him a totin' this very knittin' over to the pic-nic, i having slipped everybody's mind with the excitement of tha cheerful gatherin'. Likewise," continued the matron, glar ing with ferocious meaning at Father, "he's the only man I ever see with idees wuth a ball o' yarn, touchin' patchwork and chiny!"

"He brought us some very pooty calico last time he come up," ventured Kitty, feeling called on to swell the chorus in praise of the absent one, "and some awful nice books!"

"Do say *very* nice, Kitty, dear," whispered Marian, whereat Kitty colored penitentially, having been often told before.

"Whichever way you look at it," added Seth, in a manner suggesting that he had viewed the subject in every possible light, "whichever way you look at it, it can't be denied but we air be hoven to Pangburn for our present fortin'."

"And we should render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," said the Doctor. "Agreed. Far be it from me to derogate from his well-earned laurels. I only meant to imply that it was through the gift of nature, rather than by toilsome acquisition, that he gained them so readily. So all hail, Pang burn, with all my heart!"

"This is the last countin' you'll see, Mary Anne," said Seth sorrowfully, "onless, which we all much hope, ye see fit to com back home among us once agin."

"Miss Rooke will soon yearn for country life," said the Doc tor; "she will soon tire of the feverish town, which, from all ac counts, is more like an infant Pandemonium than anything else and come back to the peace and quiet of the Bar."

"I have warned her what she has to expect," said Gifford "*but, like most* ladies, she must see for herself. She will a

least find more of the comforts of civilization there, if few of its other blessings. This is hardly an establishment which presents attractions to any except such enforced gold-seekers as can hope for no better."

"We're goin' to better of it soon," remarked Luke, humbly, "and put up stables where the *corral* is, and storehouses in place of the huts where the Irishmen lived."

"Arter two or three months more," added Seth, prudently, "arter two or three months more, when we was also thinkin' of puttin' up a wooden roof instead of a cotting one, with other modern improvements. But come, boys, fly round and git up the chist. We must jest stow away what we've got, if it ain't such a mighty week's work. Hist out the chist, boys, and Mother, fetch us out the keys."

In their accustomed corner, over the trap-door, lay Lion and Ike, both of whom, having been fast alseep, seemed to think it highly unnecessary and absurd that they should be disturbed. However, they consented to give way, and the door having been raised, Luke and Dick Railes lifted the treasure-box from its place. It was set on the table as usual, and Mrs. Armstrong having brought the keys and the gains of the past week from a chest of drawers in the inner room, her husband unlocked the heavy padlock and opened the trunk. There lay the tin box, in the middle, with the various little bags of nuggets and the curious specimens of crystals and gold-bearing quartz arranged about its sides.

Seth now proceeded to unlock the inner sanctuary, the tin box wherein the precious dust, the fruit of their accumulated months of labor, was every week deposited. There were six little bags of buckskin, each containing from ten to five-and-twenty ounces, which were now to be added to the capital store. But as the old man opened the box his jaw dropped, his eyes dilated, and he staggered back as if he had been shot.

"Thunder and lightnin'!" exclaimed Luke, "what's the matter, father?"

"The gold!—the gold!" gasped Seth, hoarsely; "where is the gold?"

All rushed to the table, and every eye was riveted on the contents of the box. It was filled with pebbles from the river-side of many a shape and hue, but none yellow, none gold.

"The Devil!"

"We've been robbed!"

"Where is it?"

Shouted simultaneously the Doctor, Dick, and Luke Arm-

strong. The latter, with nervous haste, tore open bag after bag which had contained the nuggets. Every one had been rifled, and the contents replaced like those of the box by worthless stones. Eagerly did Luke empty every bag, peer into every corner to find some trace or fragment of the missing treasure. All, all was gone! There was not even a sparkle, save from a few pieces of quartz which had evidently been thought too bulky to carry away.

"The box!—the box!" cried the Doctor; "empty the box!"

Luke did so, and with such haste and trepidation, that the mocking pebbles rolled in every direction over the floor.

"Nothing," said Luke, in despair, "nothing here."

"Yes there is!" exclaimed Dick; "look there!"

A paper had been lying on the very bottom of the box, and now fluttered to the ground. The Doctor stooped and snatched it up. As he opened it, writing was seen on the inside.

"Read it, Doctor, read it!" cried all, impatient for some clue, now they knew the extent of their misfortune. In a hoarse growl, and with many an interpolated execration, the Doctor did so. The paper was directed on the outside to "Kernul Seth Armstrong and Co.," and ran as follows:—

"FELLER CITIZENS,

"By the time you git this I shall proberly be on the boundin' biller. In our great and glorious country events follers each other in quick sucksession, and, wafted by favorin' gales, I shall naterally strike New York immegiately after.

"In takin' leave of scenes so charmin' which fond remembrance my heart is warmin', I find it difficult to express the anxious hopes I cherish for your individooal and collective welfare. But all may be simmered down into one fervent aspiration, That you may be happy yit!

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, feller citizens, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortin'! and I've concluded to take this ere tide and Sail in! And as some on ye might think it kind o' prematoor that I take so much of my sheer to once, I hereby make over all the rest of my undivided interest in the Bar to you, Kurnel, for the benefit of the Co.

"I hope Nobody won't feel Riled. Who steals my puss steals trash. 'Tis Somethin' nothink. 'Twas mine, 'tis his'n; and altho' the gold on the Bar haint been slave to thousands, Cash Circoolates rapidly in this Happy Land, so nothing extenooate or Set down Ought in malice. As to your repootations, you can leave 'em with confidence in the hands of Pangburn, *which not enricheth* him, and makes you Poor Indeed.

think the cañon's about gin' aout. And it would be small
ess in me to be a sharin' your toils, your feelin's, and your
when there ain't Nothink else to divide. But time Flies,
ıe Etarnal Ages rolls on. My Bark is by the shore, and
n Wednesday at Twelve o'clock percisely. No Berth se-
until paid for.
arewell for ever! And yit, No. We shall meet agin,
the Mem'ry of these Scenes will be but as a Parson Bell,
am too sweet to last, when you shall Forgit the feverish
for gold in Karmer pursoots, and When the name of Pang-
shall be proudly enrolled among the Merchant Princes of
untry.

"With affectionate complements to the ladies,
"I am,
"Feller Citizens,
"Your'n, While This Mashine is To him.
"Z. PANGBURN.

'.S. I have ordered a copy of the 'Mountain Clarion' to
ıt to each of yer for 6 months, Postpaid.

'.S. No. 2. I have entirely giv' up the idee of the stun-
block in Utiky."

was too true, and all was gone. Pursuit was idle, for the
ıship taken by the plunderer had sailed on the Wednesday
e. The dreams which had counted on this treasure as the
lation of fortune were all in a moment dissipated. The
of six months' labor had been swept away, and the party at
strong's Bar were once again as poor as when they first
ecourse to the Cañon.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

When the expectant voyager, whose prow has so many days been pointing northward, first makes the promised land of gold, his eye ranges vainly along the continuous wall of frowning cliffs in search of a hospitable opening, the gateway to that haven where his bark shall find shelter and himself rest. He sees far away to the eastward the soaring peaks of the Sierra Nevada; he sees, masking their base, the rugged contour of the Coast Range; he sees, still nearer, the ramparted bulwark which yet affords no passage. He sees much that is weird and uncommon in the prospect to stimulate his imagination and pique his curiosity. The mountains have a height, a gracefulness of outline, and yet a grandeur unmatched by the prosaic Atlantic shore. The sea itself grows ruddy near the land, and the atmosphere has a positive golden tint seldom seen on the colder coast of the east. These phenomena, natural though they be, scarcely seem so to the gaze of the new-come adventurer. They seem, on the contrary, to be magical touches given to natural objects by unseen genii, to the end that visible nature may be in sympathy with the strange, romantic vicissitudes of the golden land; vicissitudes which mock all the experience of men elsewhere, and which, therefore, should fittingly be encircled by coloring and physical detail equally unprecedented.

The adventurer sees all these things and marvels. If he be sanguine, he accepts them as happy auguries, and his breast swells with hope; if superstitious, he may view them as adjuncts in a vast scheme of Satanic temptation, and his bosom may thrill with fear; but in either case those sentiments will be greatly leavened with impatience; he is on the coast of California indeed, but he has not yet seen the Golden Gate.

Far onward to the north-west, trend the lofty unbroken wall and the rugged hills of the Coast Range. Peak after peak of the

Sierras appears and vanishes in succession as the vessel rushes on. The sea grows ruddier, and the air more golden. The coast grows more distinct, until the eye discerns the point where wall and water meet. But there seems no space between wide enough to pitch even a tent upon; there is nothing but a sombre precipice springing abruptly out of the sea to a height of several hundred feet, with scarce an aperture, a nook, or a plateau to break the uniformity or to temper the inhospitable aspect of the panorama. Suddenly, almost indeed with the quickness of lightning, the cliff opens like a pair of flats in a gigantic theatre; opens with a rift as clean, as straight, and as perpendicular. The flats recede until they are near a mile apart, although the space appears but a span, and then stand like two towering sentinels guarding the pass thus rent asunder. They are the portals of the Golden Gate, and beyond them is the Bay of San Francisco.

Thus, at the very entrance of El Dorado, things come upon the beholder in the character of surprises. He is prepared at the outset to abandon all precedents, and to expect the unexpected as a matter of ordinary routine. He is prepared to enter upon a new life, neither whose pleasures nor whose pains are suggested by the experience of the old. He is warned to forget all commonplace sequences, and to begin afresh in an atmosphere of paradoxes.

This entrance seems a very speck—a mere needle's eye—to the vast and otherwise unbroken extent of the coast-wall. It is easy to see how earlier navigators ran by without discovering what is so comparatively minute and yet so signally important; for through this needle's eye, ships of the hugest tonnage may pass, and the combined navies of the world could float in safety on the magnificent bay within.

To the right—that is to say, bearing away to the southward on passing through the Golden Gate—lies the city of San Francisco. This is now a stately metropolis, whose chief constituents are solid granite, marble, and other scarcely less perishable masonry. A month is a year in California, and a year a decade, when compared with the histories of other places; so that the changes wrought since 1850 may be reckoned as equivalent to those of a century and a half elsewhere. At that time a large proportion of the inhabitants were living under canvas. There were tents on the hills and tents in the valleys; so many were there, that, in conjunction with the countless shipping in the harbor, it was difficult to escape the idea that an army had disembarked, of which those vessels were the transports. A small

town existed here prior to the discovery of gold in the upper country; a town chiefly built of *adobe*, disposed in one-storied dwellings, and devoted to a small trade in hides and tallow. There was also some attempt at military fortification on the point called the Presidio, and some religious buildings of more pretension at the Mission Dolores. But the slothful occupancy of the half-blooded race then in possession was next to none at all; and their edifices conveyed just such a notion.

When the Americans first came pouring into the place, they pitched innumerable tents; and the tremendous northwest gales soon blew them away. Then they built wooden houses for a time; and almost as speedily they were reduced to ashes. Finally they brought stone, iron, and brick sixteen thousand miles around Cape Horn, and built a town which promises to be more durable. These changes were progressive, like the means they adopted for winning the precious metal from the earth; first merely scratching up the particles wherever they could be seen to shine; secondly, the using of fluids, as water and quicksilver, to eliminate the gold from the dross; and finally, the crushing of solid rocks in powerful quartz mills, that Nature, even with such guards, should be coerced to yield up her treasure.

Into the great Bay of San Francisco are discharged the volumes of several large streams which, rising in the mountains and swelled by many an auriferous affluent, find here the outlet they have long sought for to the sea. The greatest of these, the Sacramento, boasts also of the largest interior towns of the State to grace its banks; a just distinction it would appear, since on these banks the original discoveries of the gold were made. Like all rivers in California, the Sacramento is very unequal at different seasons. Low and placid in the dry season, it becomes an angry freshet oftentimes in the wet. Not that there is just apprehension of a frequent recurrence of the great floods which devastated the valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin in December and January, 1861–2, and which destroyed the works of men to the value of millions of dollars; on the contrary, there appeared upon those occasions to be conclusive testimony in the ages of trees swept from the banks of those streams, as well as in other corroborative incidents, that no such catastrophe had occurred for several centuries before. But the Sacramento often overflows its banks in a more moderate way; and it did so on one particular night a few months after the events which were described in the last chapters had transpired at Armstrong's Bar.

It was a wild night, pitch dark, with rain falling in torrents, *and a thick* sulphurous smell in the atmosphere, as if it were

loaded with electricity which could find no other means for manifesting itself to the senses. The river was roaring on its course, sometimes expanding into a lake whose shores would scarcely have been visible by daylight; sometimes plunging swiftly through a narrow defile where the banks were too lofty to be submerged. Down the stream a long black mass, dotted and splashed with glaring lights, was flying with a speed which could not well have been exceeded had its track been ever so bright and certain, instead of so dark and doubtful. This was the steamer "Capital," on her way from Sacramento to San Francisco. How she contrived to steam in that way and yet meet no mishap, it would be impossible to explain. It would have been equally hard to account for the apparently irreconcilable qualities of her commander. He was one of those singular persons, peculiar, I fancy, to America, who unite the capacity to be in a continual state of *delirium tremens* with another, to perform their various duties—often difficult and onerous ones—in a most thorough and efficient manner. No one had ever known old Captain Bracebridge to be sober; but no one, on the other hand, ever knew him to neglect his duty, to be absent on an emergency, however unexpected, or to have any disaster happen to his boat or machinery. It really seemed as if he must keep up a dual existence, one intelligence being riveted with sleepless watchfulness on the movements of the "Capital," and the other devoted, with unremitting industry, to "liquoring" with almost every passenger that fleet vessel conveyed. The Captain was short, wiry, and active; indeed, although sixty years of age, he was, as he declared, "as spry as a catamount." He had bushy gray hair, and a keen, albeit rather watery eye of the same color; a hard, red face, and an habitually incoherent manner of speaking on all occasions save with respect to his steamer.

Such was the person who had just succeeded in inveigling Dr. Landale to his cabin to "try something," in conformity with about his tenth invitation to that effect since tea-time. As to Hugh Gifford, he had positively declined, to the obvious wonder of the Captain, to take any more than a glass of the champagne wherewith the evening's felicities had commenced; and he was now left alone, or nearly so, in the large saloon, which, running almost the whole length of the vessel, served as sitting-room, dining-hall, and promenade all in one. They had left Sacramento that afternoon, so that there had been little opportunity to make acquaintance with fellow-passengers; but the Doctor had stumbled upon an Englishman, an old friend, in that city, who happened also to be a boon companion of Captain Bracebridge, and

who had insisted on introducing them. With this exception, neither Hugh nor the Doctor knew any one on board.

It was not then surprising, especially as, being twelve o'clock, he was rather sleepy, that Gifford as he sat resolving to retire to his state-room and to forget in sleep, if possible, the moody thoughts that mingled obscurely in his brain; it was not surprising that he did not recognize or even notice a strange-looking person who was now approaching him. This was a lank, sinewy man with hollow cheeks, a sallow complexion, long, straggling black hair put behind his ears, a hawk-like profile and a particularly fierce expression, who had been hovering about the group before the Captain and the Doctor had gone to try something. He now proceeded to make his concentric rings narrower, regarding Gifford all the time with an implacable regard quite formidable to behold. He came closer still, and seeing that Gifford was still staring at vacancy, the stranger put an enormous cowhide boot under the other's chair and kicked forth a vast spittoon, which he manœuvred into a position immediately in his front; he then dragged up a second chair, and straddling across it with the back toward his face, he proceeded to drop into the vessel previously adjusted a huge quid of tobacco. This done, and still scowling horribly, he produced a savage-looking clasp-knife, and cut a similar delectable morsel to replace the one rejected. These preparations finally attracted the attention of Gifford, who now looked at the man's face with a look of inquiry not unmixed with amusement, but which the man received without changing his expression or indeed moving a muscle of his iron countenance. Having glared in silence for full a minute, he spoke at last in a voice which seemed pumped up from the very bottom of his chest:

"Be you a miner?"

"Well," said Hugh smiling, "I suppose I am."

"I've mined too," continued the man sternly, "some. But I'm more'n a miner. I'm a Pike, I am."

"A Pike?"

"A Pike and nothin' shorter. I was raised on hog and hominy, I was. I'm a hull team, I am. Likewise," he added after a short pause, and as if he had been in danger of making an important omission, "with a little yaller dog under the wagon."

"I see," responded Hugh, scarcely knowing what to say, and yet perceiving, from the impressive manner of his interlocutor, that some reply was expected.

"*P'raps,*" continued the latter, holding his head on one side,

and looking at Gifford with one eye, after the manner of an inquiring parrot, "p'raps you've never heern tell of Layfayette Sloper?"

The other admitted that he never had.

"Wall," resumed the stranger, with an air of unabated defiance, "that air pack," pointing to a shapeless bundle not far off, enveloped in a pair of dingy red blankets secured by a strap, "that air pack is his'n."

"Ah!"

"Likewise this here buck-bag is his'n, and this here plug of tobacco, and this here deck o' keards, not forgettin' this here artful little tickler," producing a fearful bowie-knife, and striking it into the table, where it stood quivering, "which are also the property of Layfayette Sloper."

"I understand," said Hugh, beginning to appreciate his companion's circumlocutory method of imparting information. "You, then, are——"

"Not to put too fine a pint on to 't," said the other severely, "Layfayette Sloper sits afore ye."

Hugh said something in the way of congratulation, and added that he thought of going to bed.

"Bed!" echoed Lafayette with a frown; "what in h—— d' ye want to go to bed for? We'll expostoolate a piece fust, I guess. Wharbouts hev you bin a minin'?"

"At a place called Armstrong's Bar."

"I reckoned as much; I ciphered you come from the Bar and no whar's else."

"Indeed?"

"I heerd that there Britisher you're a travellin' with blowin' about it to th' old Cap; I know'd he was a Britisher by his curus lingo, and I set store on his words because I thought a spell of comin' ont' the Bar myself."

"How was that, pray?"

"It bein' the fashion," explained Sloper, "for Pikes and hull teams, let alone little yaller dogs under the wagon, to keep their eyes skun, I'd bin prospectin' for a slicker place than Wild Cat Cañon; Wild Cat havin' been my previous location, and a pooty petikilarly gol darned bad one at that; so I pulled up stakes and was a hesitatin' as to whar they should he druv next when I see this." The speaker here drew forth an extremely dirty fragment of newspaper, and invited Hugh's attention to a paragraph by pointing with a still dirtier long yellow claw. "I see this, I did, and I allowed thar was the place whar them stakes ought to be druv."

The fragment was a portion of a San Francisco daily, some months old, and the paragraph which was indicated ran thus:

"Among the passengers by the 'Sonora,' on Wednesday, was our distinguished fellow-citizen and brother of the quill, Colonel Hon. Zelotes Pangburn, of the 'Mountain Clarion.' The talent, perseverance, and indomitable will of this enterprising pioneer, have been illustrated by many works of internal improvement, more especially those at Armstrong's Bar, where, it is said, he amassed a large fortune in a remarkably short space of time. The Colonel is a high-toned gentleman, and will do credit to our State on the other side. *On dit* that he proceeds to Washington to claim at the hands of Government that reward to which his long and unflinching devotion to his party justly entitles him. Attila K. Scalpgitter may well tremble when he learns that this squints toward the Custom House, and we tell him boldly and fearlessly that it *does*."

"So you thought of emulating Mr. Pangburn, did you?" Hugh asked, as he returned the paper, "and of also amassing a fortune in a remarkably short space of time?"

"Well, I did that," answered Sloper, "likewise of goin' better and emoolating that there Scalpgitter out o' the Custom House. If I understand one thing better'n another," he continued reflectively, "it's revenoo."

"But has Mr. Scalpgitter behaved ill or in any manner deserved removal?"

"He don't soot the people," said Lafayette, harshly, "and that's enough. He's jest chawed up all his popularity, and he ain't 'cute enough to lay in a fresh stock. One thing I heerd tell he did would have smashed up his political futur' in Pike whatever it does in Frisky."

"And what may that have been?"

"He put up a rail fence round his desk in the Custom House, he did, so that the citizens couldn't git close up to 't and look at the papers and see what he was writin' of. No sech stuck-up ways as them goes down with our folks."

"But if the man didn't want his private papers overlooked, or——"

"He was a servant of the people," interrupted Mr. Sloper acrimoniously, "and his papers was public papers, or they hadn't no call to be be thar. If he wanted to hev private papers he'd oughter resigned and took to drink, or any other private pastime which sooted his voos. Fences was made for cattle and not for

human critters; and to have gone and built a corral like that to keep out the citizens up to Pike, would hev jest skeared up the dod rottest row Scalpgitter or any other gitter ever heern tell of from the lips of sages. He'd hev had to make tracks, he would; and them tracks would hev had to be as spry and ily as greased lightnin'. But," he added, waving his hand as in dismissal of the offensive subject, "whar's your pile?"

"My pile?"

"The Hon. Kurnel Pangburn havin' toted off his pile, I inquire whar's your'n?"

At this, Gifford narrated briefly to his attentive listener the circumstances which preceded and attended Mr. Pangburn's departure. The processes whereby the ingenious editor had obtained the confidence of the community, and the subsequent use he had made of it in abstracting the common capital, appeared to afford Mr. Sloper the most lively satisfaction. For, although nothing could induce him to smile, there was a delighted twinkle in his cavernous eyes, and a rolling of his quid from side to side of his mouth, which were indicative of the most superlative pleasure it was in his nature to experience.

"And so he belted the hull pile?" he queried, as Gifford concluded, amid these unconcealed expressions of sympathy and joy.

"Every penny of it."

"Darn my sister's cat, then, if he ain't a screamer! a real contoomacious, highfalootin, ring-tailed top-sawyer, that's what he is! And what was all the rest on ye up to while the Kurnel was playin' this nice little game?"

"Doing? Taking him for an honest man, I suppose."

"Ye don't want no more pardners, do ye?"

"Why," replied Gifford, laughing, "I fear the same opportunities are unlikely to recur. The yield has been much less, on the average, since our loss; but we have also been much more vigilant. We resolved, too, that whenever we got up to a certain small sum, for the future, it should be at once removed to a place of greater safety."

"That's what you and the Britisher is up to now?"

"Well, we *are* taking down a little dust—not much; but we have other business which takes us to the city."

Lafayette eyed his companion for some time, in his morose way, and then asked:

"Do ye sport some?"

"Sport?" repeated Hugh.

"Be you a bucker agen Pharaoh? Air you a gay gambollier?

Hev you never fit the tiger? Hev you never tried to captur the eagle-bird by chance?"

Gifford was forced to confess his inexperience in these fascinating mysteries.

"I ain't no professed sport," continued Sloper, with some contempt, "although I kerry them keards. But I've had my experience—I've seed the elephant, and I know his way. I begun feelin' of him on Spanish monte and roulette; and I finished off with Pharaoh and Draw-Poker; and I allow that Pharaoh and Draw-Poker was too many for me. They jest over-sized my pile and raked down; which was exactly the reason, stranger, that I didn't fetch up to Armstrong's Bar."

Hugh felt a gratitude to those potent agencies which he did not feel called upon to express, but said he had always heard that it was eminently imprudent to attempt such games against professional players.

"Gen'rally speaking," said Sloper, "it are; but banks is bust sometimes, and I might be a buster as well as any other man."

"But how," asked Gifford, "did these misfortunes interfere to prevent you from coming to the Bar?"

"Why, I know'd you was a jint-stock, 'cause it said as much in Kurnel Pangburn's paper, the 'Mounting Clarion;' and there was accaounts 'most every week of folks gittin' draw'd on for comin' there and prospectin' without leave of the company; and havin' bucked away most all my pile, I'd never a dime to buy in; that's how. But I kin jest tell ye one thing, stranger, and I don't kear if you put it in when ye write to your friends, and that is, I'm bound to git even, I am. That's what I'm goin' to Frisky for. They've beat me in the diggins, but I'll clean 'em in the taown, as sure as I come from Pike Caounty. I haint got more'n two slugs to go in with, but if I don't make my everlastin' fortin out on 'em, my name ain't Sloper nor yit Layfayette. I'm goin' down to that thar burg, stranger, to realize; and gol darn my preternatooral pictur if I don't realize or die!"

With these sentiments, delivered with an air of unspeakable ferocity, Mr. Sloper replaced his bowie knife, and gloomily demanded that Gifford should descend with him to the bar, and liquor—a demand which, as it seemed to be enforced by a tacit alternative of immediate death, was prudently complied with. So they went down by gangways which were streaming with water, and all groaning and shivering with the force of the wind and the strain of the engine, and passed by the great

throbbing engine in its lurid home, with the black figures of tenders and coal-passers, looking like ministering fiends in the crimson glare, and thus into the bar.

When they got there it became obvious enough why the upper portions of the boat were comparatively deserted; for the room was crowded, almost to suffocation, with miners, and traders, and lawyers, and "sports"—four classes which predominated over all others at this season in California, and were mischievous, as a rule, in the inverse order of their enumeration.

There were a good many people who looked like Mr. Sloper, that is, with hawk faces, deep-set eyes, and hair behind ears, high *sombreros*, red flannel shirts, and long cowhide boots. There were a good many who looked like Mr. Pangburn; that is, with very greedy faces, goatees on their chins, beaver hats, and black suits from head to foot. The "sports" were distinguished by the superior richness and cut of their garments, and by wearing a profusion of (real) jewelry; they were more distinguished still by a sobriety quite remarkable among so many hard drinkers; it was incompatible with successful business to get drunk. Through the uproarious crowd Gifford and his new acquaintance elbowed their way to the spot where an urbane gentleman, with glossy black curls, immaculate linen, and a diamond breastpin, which could not have cost less than five hundred dollars, was dispensing "drinks" to the vociferous and eager customers, who kept him, nothing loath, in a continual state of activity.

Mr. Sloper took a rum-and-brandy punch, strong, and Gifford, to be consistent with what he had taken earlier, took a glass of champagne, for that attractive effervescent could be had at the bar for the same price with other, even the most common beverages, no more no less; twenty-five cents being the charge for a glass, let the liquor be what it might.

In this choice retreat there roared a very cataract of sound. There was the constant monotonous rush of the vessel through the water for an undertone; above this the intermittent heaves and throes of the machinery; and higher still the crash and jingle of an hundred shouting voices in half a dozen different languages; for England, France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and China had representatives there, as well as Yankee land. Then there was the clinking of dollars from a couple of monte tables to add to that of the glasses at the bar; for gambling was openly practised on board steamers as well as elsewhere at this period; and, to crown all, a vocal concert was in progress in one corner, an agonizing stave being just then in favor, the refrain of which appeared to be:

"Blow on, blow on, we love the h-a-o-wling
Of winds that waft us o'er the sea!" etc., *ad lib.*

The noise, the smoke, and the unsavory peculiarities of many of his neighbors led Hugh to beat a retreat as soon as he felt he could do so without giving mortal offence to Mr. Sloper, and so subject himself to the chance of being "ripped" by that stern patriot, whom he left at last engaged in a discussion with a long Kentuckian on some technical point in "Draw-Poker."

Hugh went to his state-room, an apartment shared with the Doctor, and found that that gentleman was still detained in the hospitable toils of Captain Bracebridge. He would have locked the door as fearing another attack from Lafayette, who might not unreasonably be expected to become heated with drink and eloquence below; but he must needs leave free ingress for his companion; so he prepared to stretch himself on his narrow pallet without that precaution.

Before doing so, however, Hugh drew forth, smoothed, and read over two letters which he had received during the week just passed. The one which had come the greatest distance bore a Massachusetts postmark, and its contents were these:—

"*East Canaan, Mass., July 20th*, 1851.

"DEAR HUGH,—

"It seems ever so long since you went away, especially when we think that people make fortunes so quick in California. And I hope you will make yours right away, and come home, for Pa seems a little set against your being so 'dreadful careless,' as he says you must have been to lose all that beautiful money you had saved up. He thinks he knows some of the Pangburns, and says they are all smart, and sure to turn out rich. Pamelia Staples has married very well off, and his name is Cuticle S. Flip, with quite a large practice, and I admire to see the chaise they come to church in on Sundays, though he is sometimes called out during service. Pa frets about the mortgage, and—I wouldn't say it to any one but you—I think he drinks some because the Pennifeathers have a new roof to their barn, and sold their first hay at eighteen-fifty, he only getting eighteen-twenty-five. I forgot to say that Isabel Tarbox—you remember a black-eyed girl (not a very nice complexion) you thought pretty? Well, she is married down at Boston, Pa says, to a very good thing in fish. People here seem to speak rather coldly about you, I don't know why, which is very wicked of them. But they act as though folks who are away must always be doing something wrong, and

to be systemically run down, unless they come back
th a great deal of money. This aggravates me pretty
it perhaps, dear Hugh, it *was* a little careless to lose all
ney, and when I see the Cuticle Flips with that change-
and real ostriches in a horse and chaise, sometimes am
nough to repine at the hardness of fortune. Which re-
e of our minister's new house, and what he said about
n we called there. The house is beautiful, being an ex-
el of the Parthenon, furnished with the most lovely rose-
ano, and everything Turkey in the chambers, and Brus-
he parlors. It is already known as the Pride of Canaan,
d by his affectionate parishioners to Rev. Pastile F. Bau-
wouldn't think of writing what he said about you, but I
spected Pa some of putting Mr. Baubee up to it, know-
words always fall with Weight, and besides, I do not like
any secrets from you during the present understanding.
e said was that, considering your antecedents and youth-
osphere—the old leaven brought by your Pa from a sinful
enlightened soil—and the physiological consequences
he Calm Eye of science could predict of such conditions,
a were likely to turn out illy. That in a general way
d you was a brand whom it wouldn't pay to try and pluck
e burning. And this idea that you won't pay seems to be
in Pa's head ever since. So I do trust, dear Hugh, anx-
I am to reconcile our hopes with filial devotion, that you
long, by some means or other, make up for the past, and
calumny by ample provision for the future. I am quite
it there's nothing for silencing the world like being inde-
t of it, and folks in Canaan now appear to be quite *agreed*
ubject of substantial property. I told brother John what Mr.
said about you, and he said, 'Les absens sont toujours
nd that he was an old jackass; but it is right to add that
think this fairly represents current opinion in Canaan.
to have a visitor next week—young Mr. Gaycow, who
ted heavily last fall for a rise in groceries; he had a
ou know, at Canaan Centre, and since then has made a
eal of money in tacks, and has bought a factory with very
water power at Persepolis, N. Y. Well, he is coming
buy property, and Pa would insist on his staying with
ng his sojourn, which is therefore agreed, and I am to
new changeable silk, purple in one light, and gold in an-
ike Mrs. Flip's. Ah, Hugh, I hope it will not be faded
ime you get back. But it's quite true they don't wear
as black. Pray, dear Hugh, take care of your precious

health, and the gold you may be fortunate enough to dig hen after, for the sake of

"Your affectionate but anxious,
"VIRGINIA."

"N.B.—We hear a good deal of 'specimens.' If you we to send some nice, *rich* ones, *directed to Pa*, I think it would ha a good effect.—V."

Hugh's other letter was much briefer, and ran as follows:—

"*San Francisco, Oct. 20th*, 1851.

"MY FRIEND,—

"Although I think it had been better otherwise, I m yet keep my promise, and tell you that I am to sail by the 'Go en Age' next Wednesday, for New York.

"M. R."

Gifford read these missives and re-read them, and then co pared the writings in a mechanical sort of way; and then heaved a great sigh, and put them away again in the poc whence they came. Then he lay down in his berth for a whi and dreamed strange dreams, wherein Marian came and sm sweetly upon him, and Mr. Sloper came and danced madly and down with Cuticle S. Flip. From these uneasy slumb he was roused now and again by bacchanalian shouts and harsh yell of the people who loved the h-a-o-wling of wi that blew them o'er the sea. And then the Doctor came in v late and rather unsteady, and not quite so decorous gene as was his wont; whence ensued some discussion of the rel merits as boon companions of the Captain and Sloper. Fina not even the incessant Babel of noises, and not even the j and thumps, which gave the idea that the steamer was cras through a submarine forest, could keep Hugh awake lo and he fell into a heavy sleep. When he awoke, the sun pouring a flood of yellow light through the state-room, and looked forth from the window, and saw for the first time far-famed golden city.

CHAPTER II.

neet a man dressed in broadcloth and fine linen, laying he law to listening potentates of trade, and who on in- n is remembered as an Irish cab driver in the city of New -to find in another, who handcarts your luggage to the ı man of Cambridge who sweetens brokerage with Greek ons—to recognize in the voluble auctioneer on a corner, mer occupant of a not obscure pulpit—to see half the ıs population of a commercial town thronging to gam- ables in open day—to read names on election papers posted lidates for high offices, which belong to people who ran lefaulters and disgraced from their homes in the East—all and many more kindred peculiarities may be admitted to l calculated to strike a new-comer with interest and aston- ıt. With these and many more such extraordinary things ll of us familiar who were in San Francisco in 1850.

e then the city has crept up and covered many a slope at that time was bare. Since then the tents of Happy have been superseded by solid masonry. Since then was most suggestive of a huge gipsy encampment has ɜ suggestive of the early vigor of Carthage or of Tyre. ing has ceased in the high places, and the gamblers ı longer the magnates of the land. Women are in a · ratio than as one to fifty of the population—a propor- hich then unfortunately existed; and such a thing as a ı not followed about the town as a natural curiosity. I e a sudden fusilade of pistol-shots is a more uncommon ırtling thing there now than it was then; albeit we were old of a wonderful desperado who managed to kill five ıts who set upon him in the comfortable old-fashioned way ɔublic streets; an incident which appeared to revive in vspapers of the place quite touching and sentimental re- ıces.

ɛe merry days are gone when excitable gentlemen used to and shoot each other down at corners, or when—as they ıid to have done at Vallecitos—the playful fellows would ɪt from gambling houses at midnight and fire promiscuous up and down the streets, from mere speculative motives vhat they might hit. The times when you could go up to

the Plaza of an evening, feeling certain if your spirits were languid of having them quickened and refreshed by the spectacle of a rattling "knock-down and drag-out fight," which would even be among the tamest and most ordinary episodes of nightly amusements, have doubtless vanished;—those small hours when governors, and senators, and great lawyers, and leading bankers mingled graciously with blacklegs, pugilists, and "fancy men," and staked their salaries, their retainers, and their depositors' fortunes, if not their own, upon the chances of faro, have gone, I suppose, to return no more.

The promising epoch when Irish ward politicians—the dregs of the dregs of the great Atlantic towns—with Australian ticket-of-leave men and a sprinkling of Western border ruffians, dominated San Francisco, and fostered social conditions against which decent men, in self-defence, at last took the law in their own hands by organizing the Vigilance Committee, has been replaced by another less variant to civilization. This committee, which was a sort of Wittenagemote or mass meeting of Judge Lynches, was one of those unlawful organizations for a good end which the intriguing, the turbulent, and the debauched always denounce most bitterly on the score of their technical illegality, for the excellent reason that their own excesses could never have been checked by any better authorized machinery that existed. The Vigilance Committee, like other agencies which could be named, was distinctly unconstitutional and as distinctly necessary, not for the purgation alone, but for the absolute existence of the community. It put an end to gross abuses by radical measures, indicated the way to prepare for a healthy future, did its work thoroughly, and then, unlike some other revolutionary committees we all wot of, by its own voluntary act and motion disappeared.

But in 1850 all those choice and eccentric spirits, who were destined to be so cruelly interfered with, exported, suspended, or restrained, were in high feather, and exerted full sway in the land of gold. So far were they from being ashamed of themselves, that, with a pride which often goeth before a fall, they vaunted and glorified their misdeeds before the common gaze; which, as many of them were in official stations, they could more readily do. It is evident from the reaction which they provoked that the social elements were by no means all bad. On the contrary, they included much that was honorable, high-minded, enterprising, and progressive. San Francisco was a sample pattern, in which were woven and interwoven threads of gold and of dross—a specimen which exhibited in little all

that is brightest and best, and all that is basest and worst in American society. But it is only fair to say that nearly all the latter constituents were, as they usually are, palpably and immediately of European origin. It seems to be in the nature of things that these inevitable immigrants, much as they always hate the Old World, should be as troublesome in their changed situation as if they equally hated the New.

California, I have said, was a land of surprises; and it was a curious study to see how anomalies in character—unexpected and unaccountable warps one way or the other—seemed to be produced or reacted by strange things, physical and material. It was curious to see blood relations, one of whom came suddenly into the possession of wealth beyond his wildest dreams, refuse the other money to buy food or shelter; curious, in another similar case, to see the lucky adventurer insist upon sharing dollar for dollar with his less fortunate brother. It was instructive to see starchy, cast-iron men, who had been deacons of New England churches may be, plunging frantically into the most reckless dissipation in San Francisco; instructive to see those artful persons, who used to dodge circumspectly up tortuous alleys where drink is sold on the sly in Puritanic Boston, fearful lest any critical eye should track their devious steps, now drinking, and swaggering, and cursing, full in the public view, amid the blaze of full noon; instructive to see scholars turned cartmen, divines turned hawkers, gamblers made judges, and ploughmen transformed into millionaires.

But Hugh Gifford thought little of these things, however he might ordinarily have appreciated their teachings. He was in the same town with Marian; breathing the same air, seeing the same sights, treading the same streets which she might daily tread; and all that he saw and heard was as nothing for its own sake, and only interesting as associated with this absorbing thought. Was he in love with her then, and had his heart altogether turned traitor to Virginia? He did not think so; at least not always, although there were certainly times when his brow would knit and his breast grow cold as he read, in almost every line of her letters, how the glorification of lucre, and the pitiful standards of those who surrounded the girl, had grown into and debased a soul which might naturally have been a generous one. But at such times, and on the heels of such reflections, he would ask himself what right, of all others, *he* had to contemn Virginia for the love of money. Was it not the master passion, the engrossing desire of his own soul to make himself, by some means or another, rich? Did he not come to Califor-

nia with that passion, that desire, paramount as the end-all, if not altogether the be-all, of his aspirations? How unworthy, then, to blame Virginia for at most sympathizing with what she knew to occupy so large a place in his thoughts. It must be unworthy, it must be unjust; and yet why did he find himself continually indulging in such covert censure? He often asked himself the question. But it did not occur to him, introspective as was his nature, that the reason lay in the fact that he had changed and she had not

And Marian, who had wrought this change in all honor and purity of intention, so far as wishing the young man to set up for himself higher standards, to aim at a loftier ambition; Marian, who had earnestly hoped to be instrumental in forwarding Virginia's happiness through elevating the character of her affianced, had unwittingly done more than she had proposed; more than would have sufficed, had she gained a premonitory glimpse of it, to have made her flee away from Armstrong's Bar long before she did so. For Marian's self-respect, unconventional though she might be, was of that nice and delicate character which shrinks from the bare suspicion of a taint, which cannot continue what it is, and yet permit its owner, by any possibility, to find a pleasure through another's pain. No; she had no mistrust, not the faintest, that she was doing any wrong to Virginia by the alienation of Gifford's feelings. There were two strong bars against the passage of such a suspicion; the one was her own remarkable freedom from personal vanity, the other the self-contained and reserved nature of Gifford himself.

For my part—familiar as I am and have been with all the circumstances—I am afraid that, with the usual perversity of humanity, Gifford fell in love with Marian on the same night that he saw poor Luke put her little Testament over against his heart. I do not like Hugh any the better for the thought; and yet why should we be uncharitable, if love really is, as they say, so despotic that the feelings of those he rules are absolutely involuntary? But acts may be controlled, I am informed, if feelings cannot be; and it was just their acts that both Hugh and Marian, each unbeknown to the other, had been stoutly controlling.

Marian left the Bar on the Monday which followed that doleful Saturday night when the robbery was discovered which made her friends all poor again. After the first outburst of indignation and disappointment, the miners had come to the only sensible determination which seemed open to them; that is to say to go quietly to work and retrieve their loss. As has been seen

; was useless; so for the present, at least, the ingenious
arn was left to the undisturbed enjoyment of his ill-gotten

To prove a case in the Atlantic States would have in-
great expense and difficulty, even supposing the culprit
pprehended there. But if he had eschewed Utica, as he
d his intention of doing, who should tell in what Troy,
, Thebes, Rome, or Paradise Centre, the erring steps of
spoiler were to be traced?

a the method of the burglary remained a mystery; for
gh poor Ichabod confessed the device whereby he had
duced to quit the cabin for a space long enough to carry
no one except the perpetrator could explain its details;
moreover, were held to be of little consequence since the
as done, unless to teach the propriety of greater caution
future.

ian went to the town, and a few days afterward I followed
ther. Urgent business obliged my presence in San Fran-
ut, in truth, I had grown weary of mining; and in leav-
d made arrangements to provide a substitute who should
my place upon the same terms. It was my hope to have
f some service to Marian in finding her a position as gov-
or teacher, such as I knew she desired to procure. But
ving I learned that the service was unnecessary; she had
obtained a situation in a French family, where her know-
of the language was of peculiar advantage. There were
children, all girls, to supervise; the mother being an in-
and the father, a quiet, sagacious Lyonnaise of fifty, the
ne of the family who spoke English. The conditions of
d and supply in the San Franciscan market for competent
esses who could speak French were fortunately such as
lude the necessity for references; and as the engagement
ly from month to month—to enable Marian to depart
she might hear from her European correspondent—all par-
re well satisfied.

ian had kept her word as to acquainting Hugh with the
f her departure, and he could not resist coming to bid her
ll. There were, as we have seen, other excuses for his
: gold to be brought down to bank, purchases to be
for the colony—reasons enough for the journey; but it
in some one else would have been the Doctor's companion
not been for the all-important one. Not but Gifford was
partial to the former's society, and, since Marian's depart-
ught it more frequently than that of any one else; but it
t necessary to come to San Francisco in order to enjoy it.

It was on a Sunday morning that they arrived, but the shops were open, the gamblers in full blast, and few, indeed, if any, of the signs could be seen usual in Christian communities as marking the day of rest. His companion went at once to procure some drugs and chemicals he required, and Hugh made his way to the residence of M. Bellot; rather a distinguished mansion in the upper part of the town, with some attempt at flowers and shrubbery about it. As the site of San Francisco then consisted almost exclusively of shifting sandhills, these surroundings of themselves gave the house an air of distinction; and when Hugh passed through the gate and ascended the steps leading to the hall-door, the perfume of some creeping shrubs, being like others at Armstrong's Bar, reminded him so forcibly of Marian that his breath came short, and his hand shook a little as he rang for admittance. The bell—for knockers were as rare in San Francisco as in most American towns—sounded sharply through the house, and gave a presage of emptiness which, so far as the visitor's hopes were concerned, was destined to be fulfilled. Miss Rooke had gone with the three demoiselles to Oakland, in Contracosta. M. Bellot had a brother there, and all the family except Madame had gone on Saturday to be present at a sort of fête which was partly complimentary to Miss Rooke, who was so soon to depart to their great regret; and they were expected to return to-morrow. With this unwelcome intelligence Hugh turned away, and, woefully disappointed, retraced his steps into the heart of the city.

He wandered listlessly down into the open space which the first new-comers among the Anglo-Americans had essayed to change from "The Plaza" into "Portsmouth Square," but—a notable instance of the refusal of an ancient cognomen to give place to a new and foreign one—unsuccessfully. For people would call the spot "The Plaza" in 1850, and although it then was, as it may still be, known on the city maps as "Portsmouth Square," it got the name nowhere else. This "Plaza," then, formerly enclosed by one-storied houses of *adobe*, several of which, in the days we write of, still remained, was now enriched by buildings of a remarkable and unique style of architecture. The materials were chiefly pine boards and cotton canvas, the dimensions very large, and the general exterior effect, save in the matter of size, not over imposing. The façades consisted almost entirely of doors surmounted by painted signs, such as "El Dorado," "Bella Union," &c., being the names whereby the respective proprietors wished their establishments to be known. Inside of these establishments was seen one vast hall, the area being usu-

left unpartitioned. But although there was little color or re- for the eye in the signs and flags which alone broke the mo- tonous white of their outsides, the interiors of these strange ifices were far different, and by no means open to such a re- oach. Here were enormous mirrors covering the walls on all les, only alternating now and then with huge oil paintings of gh colors and equivocal subjects. Cut-glass chandeliers which, night, gave the light of day, shimmered and glittered in ev- y direction. On one side ran a long counter or bar, where umbers of attendants were constantly engaged; while behind hem were piled glasses, and decanters, and bottles, and pitch- rs of all imaginable shapes and hues. These sparkling objects, eflected by mirrors behind them, added to the general brilliancy f the scene, while hundreds of figures moving restlessly about, nany of them wearing the then predominant red flannel shirt as n outer garment, with slouched hats and long boots, with here nd there the gaudy Mexican serape, gave an effect truly sur- rising to an eye accustomed only to the more common sights f modern civilization.

For the rest, the hall was filled with gaming-tables; tables of ll shapes and sizes for all sorts of games; tables for faro, tables for monte, tables for roulette, tables for vingt-et-un, tables for rouge-et-noir; tables where the dealers were Americans, Englishmen, Mexicans, Frenchmen, Jews, and women—few, happily, of the latter—indiscriminately mixed, all cool and industrious, and all well patronized.

Into such a pandemonium did Hugh Gifford find his way, staring at the sights, confused by the sounds, and instinctively comparing each with the sober-looking people and the quiet church bells, wherewith the Sabbath morning was associated in all his past memories. What an extraordinary society—what extraordinary habits—had the gold discovery all of a sudden conjured up, as dragon's teeth brought from the earth armed men

Every moment men came trooping in, evidently fresh from the mines, their faces worn with toil and exposure, their garments dirt-stained and often in fragments, and who went straight to the faro table, staked their bag of precious dust on the turn of a single card, lost or won with the same imperturbability, and walked out again. It was not customary at this time to examine the contents of such bags; that would have taken too much time, and hurt the business by suggesting a suspicion perhaps of the integrity of the owner. The card was turned, and, if the bank lost, the dust was promptly weighed, and its equivalent handed over in kind or in gold coin; if the bank won, the

bag was callously, and generally without inspection, ca among the rouleux and loose treasure of the concern, w were contained in a box within easy reach of the dealer. M sat at the tables from morning till night, now winning, nov ing, but in either case unwilling or unable to tear themselves from the fascination. These people were commonly very turn; indeed, any audible expression of feeling respecting play was unusual; so that, with the exception of an occasi Spanish oath and the unceasing chink of coin and shufflin cards, the vicinage of the tables was comparatively quiet.

Not so, however, the bar, where there was an endless ro shoutings, cursings, and boisterous recognitions. Men were tinually meeting for the first time since separating in "the Sta and signalizing the occasion as if from the deck of a ship. litical talk, friendly talk, gambling talk, and drunken talk ed in the charming medley, and swelled its discordant clima the very echo. Among those who were the loudest, the big and perhaps the tipsiest of the most conspicuous group in th loon, Gifford remarked a red man, with a round face and go hair which stuck in shreds and patches to his perspiring foreh He wore a white hat, which was pushed far back, and a l diamond sun in his bosom, almost as wide as a dollar. clothes consisted of a suit of a vast pattern in green and b checks, and he had a large red silk pocket handkerchief whic occasionally filliped in playful manner into the faces of his n distant interlocutors at the bar. This gentleman was decl ing in a heated key, and appeared to be regarded with grea ference and admiration, not only by the bar-keepers, but by crowd around him.

While Hugh was regarding this group and trying to catch signification of some of the words of wisdom which were fa from its vociferous centre, he felt his hat slightly tipped ove eyes from behind, and, turning to see who had adopted thi icate, but not unusual, method of salutation, found at his e Mr. Sloper.

"I'll liquor with you this time," said the latter, as if purs a previous conversation. "I've been a buckin', and I hain' no more change 'n the law allows."

"Cleaned out, eh?" said Hugh, recognizing the force o invitation, as they made their way to the bar.

"Can't say I'm exactly cleaned out, since I've got one t sand nine hundred and seventy-six cigars," returned Lafay "five I guv away, and nineteen I smoked last night. Try they air A 1, and no discount."

"I wasn't aware," said Hugh, accepting the offer, "that you dealt in the article."

"No more I didn't till arter you turned in last night. Then I run agin a cuss who had three thousand cigars, and ne'er a red besides, bein' played out chasin' the eagle 'board the boat. I had three hundred dollars, and his Havanas was worth more rather than less. So we jest went in for a little plain poker to pass away time. We played till daylight and was jest even. We took a hand for the very last, and he drawed a good un. He bet a clean thousand o' them weeds, and I see 'em and went two slugs better; he seed 'em and went a thousand better 'n me. I called, and he laid down three aces and two kings; I slung four dooses atop on 'em, and raked down the pile."

"So that you're now so much the richer?"

"Ne'er a time. I sold a thousand for one hundred and fifty to this 'ere chap who keeps the den; and I've lost four hundred and more in his darned old Pharaoh bank since breakfast; that's so."

"Well," said Hugh, doubtfully, "don't you think it about time to knock off?"

"Not in these boots, I don't. I'm playin' for even now, and even I'm a goin' to be. A squeeze more bitters in that 'ere cocktail, young man. I hain't had drinks enough yit," continued Mr. Sloper, sternly, "to feel riled. I've got to git my dander up, and then you'll see the har fly. D'ye know that man ye was looking at jest now?"

"No."

"No!" repeated the other, turning his profile toward Hugh, and fixing one keen eye reprovingly upon him. "Don't know that air man! Why, he's a Californian Instertooshun, he is. He's one of the gol-darndest, hull-hoggest, out-and-out screamers that ever drunk whiskey! Why, he's the man that killed Hank Swett for takin' the copper off his parlee and the last card in, at old Deaf Dan's bank, up to Stockton! I'll tell ye what," said Sloper, with fierce resolution, "I'll put ye through!"

"Don't!" said Hugh, at a hazard.

"Yes, I will. Why," he added, seizing Hugh's shoulder, and gripping it hard as if to nerve him to bear what was to follow, "that ere h-a-o-wling oriator is Judge Skewer!"

"Judge Skewer!"

"Achilles McGaw O'Rafferty Skewer," said Lafayette, leaning back a little to watch the effect of his announcement. "Guess ye know who he is now, don't ye?"

"I confess I——"

"Say no more," cried Sloper, authoritatively. "I'll pu through!" And he darted off with the apparent desig carry his mysterious threat into effect. As quickly, howeve returned, and whispering hurriedly, "Don't say anythink to 'bout Hank Swett; he's easy het, and p'raps he might knif ye know!" disappeared again.

"I say," exclaimed Hugh, in some dismay; "don't! l on! I'd rather not, whatever it is!" But expostulation was less, for Sloper was already achieving his purpose.

Presently he was seen wriggling and plunging through crowd, and to force his way toward the man with the white and the golden hair. That person was just in the act of ing his fifth drink without stirring from the spot, and his l was turned for the moment to Mr. Sloper. The latter seized the drinker firmly round the waist, from behind, dragged him backwards through the crowd to where Gifford standing.

"Quit!" roared the Judge. "Who is't? Let up, or I'll daylight inter yer!"

But his assailant whispered a cabalistic word in his ear, he continued, in the same breath, while he was released faced about:

"Why, Lafe! You here! What in —— fetched you d from up country?"

Lafe made a significant gesture.

"Broke, air ye? *Quiere Oro?* Well, now, if you wa hundred——"

"No, I don't, Judge. I kin kerry sail so fur, and wh can't I'll let ye know. I jest wanted t' interdoose ye to a fr o' mine. Judge Skewer, Cap'en Giffurd; Cap'en Giff Judge Skewer."

"How air *you?*" inquired the Judge, with great inte "How do you find yourself *now?* Take somethink? W all a takin' somethink. Come, Lafe, *re*-plenish, and let the flo bowl go round!"

With this the Judge finished his glass at a gulp, and im diately ordered another, insisting that his companions shoul the like. While these refreshments were in preparation, caught sight of a large bowl, or ewer, filled with broken f ments of ice, with which he now began slyly to pelt the p he had just quitted, watching the results of his shots in opposite mirror.

"The boys is havin' a lively time here to-day," contin Judge Skewer, juicily, "Not but that the festive scene's p

reg'lar ; only there's more o' the old stiff drinkers round than usual. Where did you say you come from, Cap'en Gifford ?"

Hugh hadn't said, but he now admitted that he hailed from Massachusetts.

"Dreffful sot up State, ain't it? Good many nice boys, tho', come from there ; too darned pooritanical for 'em to home, I reckon. We don't hev nuthin' o' that kind here. Gents, I'm lookin' at yer !"

"Air you a runnin', Judge ?" queried Sloper, mysteriously.

"I am that. And I'm a goin' to keep on till I run all these 'ere scallywags off the track. I ain't a goin' to be bought off this time with no ten thousand and a sheer in Jim Docket's bank. I tell yer," he continued, confidentially, "I'm a goin' to stick to my friends from the word 'Go!' Kin you stump-speak some, Cap'en ?"

Hugh didn't know, he had never tried ; but as he had sometimes addressed juries, he thought he might.

"You air the bone and sinoo, you young men air," said the Judge, pressing Gifford's hand with great feeling and urbanity, "you air the bone and sinoo, who yer country looks to keep her end up, and cement her power. I'll bet somethink on you, I will ! and I'm goin' to make a lofty pile ! Where'd you say you'd been a minin' of, Cap'en ?"

Hugh mentioned the name of Armstrong's Bar.

"Armstrong's Bar ! I've heerd on't as a place risin' fast in wealth and consequence. Fill up, Lafe. You're kinder shirkin' yer rum, you air ! Fourteen drops for you, Cap'en ? Why, that wouldn't drown a fly ! What I was goin' to let on, gentlemen, was that we air expectin' a time !"

"A reg'lar time ?" suggested Mr. Sloper, sipping his whiskey.

"Better—a darned sight better. You'd oughter 'f heerd that Tom Flyer has jest arrived from York, and was tearin' about last night as blue as a razor ! and Yankee Bullyman, and Sydney Bob, and Belcher Gay, and some more o' the 'sports ; they feel like givin' him a turn ; and he's got a strong gang with him, Tom has, and I reckon he's the wuss man to tackle in the world, lettin' bowies and sixshooters alone ; so if these here Ducks and his crowd fall together we air expectin' a time !"

"I hain't seen a real square old scrimmage," said Lafayette sorrowfully, "for more'n three months. Not, candidways, since them curus capers to Beneshy, when Pony Lazarous sliced off Johnny Fargo's nose."

"Ah !" said the Judge sympathetically, "them was gay old times. Nothin' but champagne cocktails and Pharaoh and free

fights, from night till morn and morn till dooey eve! But," he continued reassuringly, "I do actooally b'lieve we shall have time with these 'ere roughs nigh as good 's any o' the old-fashioned ones. How much dust did you say you fetched down from the Bar, Cap'en?"

Hugh's reply was drowned in the sudden and unexpected rush of the Judge's late boon companions, who, impatient at his protracted absence, now burst into the circle with mingling yells the most intelligible purport of which seemed to be that there was too much talkin' between drinks, and that they see him fire that last hunk of ice.

"Hold on now, gents, hold on," cried the Judge with dignity, and stilling the uproar with a Demosthenean wave of the hand, "allow *me*. Permit me to introdoose—Sheriff Mayhem Cap'en Gifford; brandy straight for me, what's your'n, Sheriff? This here is our Surrogate, Malachi Gallus; Major Gifford; gin cocktail, Charley, with a very little sugar. Mr. McCracken, permit me to introdoose—Mr. McCracken, the great pool player Kurnel Gifford. Two more brandies, Charles. I beg your pardding, I'm sure. This is the honored Chief of our Fire Department and former vanquisher of the 'Lancashire Chicken' and the 'Lily of the Valley;' Mr. Samson Adder, this is my esteemed friend, General Gifford. Air you all ready? If so, fire!"

Messrs. Mayhem, Gallus, McCracken, and Adder, all smelling horribly of spirits, shook Gifford's hand in succession with tremendous energy, and being supplied with fresh glasses of their favorite stimulants, tossed them off with a hasty formula that sounded very like "Success to crime."

"General Gifford's one of my boys," announced Judge Skewer, who by this time had passed his arm affectionately round Hugh's neck, "and bein' a stranger to this 'ere praowd taown—unbeknown, as I may say, to these halls of dazzlin' light, I'm a goin' to show him the elephant. My intellectooal feller citizen Lafayette Sloper is, I believe, well known among ye. We air expectin' a time, and until it comes, all I kin say is, drink hearty and vote for Skewer!"

This sentiment was received with much applause, and those unqualified endorsements which were forthcoming as often as the Judge paid for the drinks; but excitement was greatly augmented when Mr. Sloper returned from the door, whither he had gone for a moment, and, with as gratified an expression as his saturnine features were capable of, said:

"The Ducks air a comin'!"

"Ye don't say so! Where d'ye s'pose Tom's party air?

Now there'll be fun, and no mistake!" broke delightedly from different members of the group, as a fresh drink was proposed in honor of the bearer of the happy tidings.

"But, Lafe," suggested the Judge anxiously, "there's no tellin' for sure that Tom and the York boys 'll happen along jest at the right minute. Wouldn't it pay to kind o' slip round taown and let 'em know where these Ducks is?"

"'Taint no use," replied Lafe; "the trap's all sot. They know jest as well as we do where the Ducks hang aout. You see now, there'll be the allfiredest, tearinest, sweet-scented little riot in 'bout ten minutes, ever skeared up this side o' h——."

"If you think so," remarked Gifford, "don't you think we had better go away?"

"Go away!" echoed the Judge, with stupefied amazement. "Go away! What fur?"

"What for? Why, to be safe out of the row—to escape the tumult, to be sure."

"Escape the toomult! Why, my dear unsophisticated gene-ral, to *see* the toomult was jest what we come here for!"

"*I* come here to see a toomult," affirmed Mr. Sloper, sternly, "and a toomult I'll have, or blood; and I don't kear a darn which."

"Meanin', naterally," said the Judge, "a good knock-down and drag-aout fight. That's your idee, ain't it, Lafe?"

"That was my meanin'," acquiesced Lafe, with acerbity, for the notion of quitting any spot likely to be the scene of a row was to him, perhaps, of almost all others, the most senseless and distasteful.

"If I know merself intimately," continued Judge Skewer, judicially, "and this court thinks it does, nobody of this 'ere party leaves until we see things through."

"There's too much talkin' agin," observed the Sheriff with a menacing air, "between drinks. I don't feel good yit, I don't. I don't take kindly to my rum when there's sech a heap o' cacklin', I don't. Charles, we air a repeatin'!"

At this point a great hubbub arose near the doors, and presently the crowd rolled back and opened a way to the bar for the choice spirits termed by Sloper the "Ducks." They consisted, to speak plainly, of the very *elite* of the reckless and turbulent fighting men, or more commonly, "shoulder strikers," to be found in California. In the wild and lawless society which then existed, this class of ruffians were highly important and influential. Almost any one who became prominent, either as a

political candidate, a tavern or saloon keeper, a proprietor gambling rooms, or the like, found it necessary to propitiate not to directly subsidize, this crew, under pain of defeat, failu or even personal molestation. Wherever they went, then, tl were received with affected if not real cordiality and joy; a their capacity at once for pommelling and robbing stood th in as good stead as did ever similar repute the moss troopers black mailers of old.

Just at present their reign seemed likely to be disputed, a their prestige to be impaired by fresh arrivals from the Atlan States. A deputation of notable prize-fighters, headed by a lebrity famous for winning a recent desperate battle against hitherto invincible opponent, had landed from the last steam and, after reconnoitring their ground, had coolly announce determination to "clean out" and supplant the autocrats n holding undivided sway. This was barely a day or two befo and furnished reason for the profound interest in forthcomi events expressed by Skewer, Sloper & Co. Certainly no regi could be worse than that of the desperadoes in power. Seve among them had been transported from Great Britain for div felonies, and their general moral tone was far below the avera of even their questionable kidney. On the other hand, the n comers, although indubitably of the "fancy," were men w had never been charged with crime; and although there mig not have been much to choose between the factions so far as th disposition towards fighting and riotous living were concern the strangers had beyond question the cleanest hands, and view of their records were most likely to keep them so. It hardly necessary to add, for the information of those famil with the material of the dangerous classes in America, that t horde in possession were chiefly foreigners, and that the arriv were almost all native-born.

The party which now swaggered into the hall were for t most part very expensively dressed, their brawny shoulders be cased in glossy broadcloth, and their inflamed, bull-dog-look faces surmounted by irreproachable castors. They all had aggerated cerebellums, heavy jaw-bones, flinty brows, and defi expressions. There appeared to be a dozen or fifteen of th and as the crowd parted with respectful deference to allow tl passage to the bar, they evidently accepted the homage as rig due to the importance and dignity of their social position. T were talking and gesticulating with great excitement and ener and they ordered champagne, several bottles of which w promptly opened for their use. Gifford remarked, howe

nat none of their number even offered to pay for it, and mentioned the omission in an undertone to Sloper.

"If they was to ask one o' them thar Ducks for pay," explained the worthy, "the house 'd jest come down in about ten minutes. They air on the fightin' lay, they air, and they travel on their shape."

"But," urged Hugh, "surely there must be some law, some authority to protect people in the possession of their property?"

"If any judge was to go back on them thar Ducks he'd jest git voted out of office so quick 'twould make his head swim."

"We must allow, then, that this is a very bad state of society."

"I reckon ye'd better not bile over on our glorious instertooshuns," retorted Lafayette, turning one eye with extreme suspicion on his interlocutor. "If that thar Britisher you're travellin' with has inocoolated ye with the pison out o' that rotten old hum o' his'n, you'd best not show it where the Ducks is. The Ducks is awful sot agin praoud old aristocracies; that's so; and they strike out awful bitter when they git riled."

Hugh promised to keep their propensities under consideration, as in all prudence became him, explaining, meanwhile, to the incredulous Sloper that his criticism bore only a local and temporary application, which, although perhaps it might be offensive to the Ducks, need not necessarily be so to any other patriot whatever. Pending this elucidation a tremendous howl without, followed by a hasty scrambling together of their gold and dust on the part of the "bankers" nearest the doors, gave signal that some fresh incident was about to transpire.

"It's the York boys," cried Judge Skewer, rubbing his hands in ecstasy; "it's Tom and the York boys. I know'd they'd come. Let's take a drink for the very last, and then, gents, stand by for squalls. Gineral Gifford, you jest freeze close to me, for bein' in, allers, with both gangs, I don't jine either too pop'lar till I see which licks!"

"Hooray!" roared Mayhem, Gallus, McCracken, and Adder, in unison. "Hooray for them as licks!"

With a roar of sound like so many wild animals suddenly let loose from their cages, the redoubted Flyer and his followers came tearing, screeching, bellowing into the hall. Nearly all were in red flannel shirts, a distinctive uniform, as it appeared, in token of a democratic uprising against the hierarchy of the Ducks. There was a perfect Babel of oaths, execrations, questions, replies, and giving of the lie; but where fifty voices were speaking together, and at their utmost tension, it was idle even

to try to get at the purport of their speech. There was a brandishing of gigantic fists, a scattering on all sides of the affrighted throng who were not immediately of the hostile parties; but although every one knew mischief was coming, none knew the precise why or wherefore. Short was the parley, for, with the rapidity of lightning, a towering figure of the "York boys" threw himself right into the very centre of the group of Ducks. Three of them went down almost instantly under this man's sledge-hammer blows; but they were soon up again, and then the fight began in downright earnest. Every one of the two parties was immediately hotly engaged. Over went the tables in every direction, and coin, and bags, and ivory checks, and boxes, rolling and tumbling about the floor, with their frantic owners sprawling and grasping after them, added to the hideous confusion.

Meanwhile Judge Skewer was fairly dancing with glee, and the others of his company, as if the din were insufficient, roared themseles quite purple with shouts which accompanied and set off the row, as melodramatic action is illustrated by a "hurry" in the orchestra. By this time, too, Mr. Sloper was standing on the bar, and, not content with tossing wine-glasses and such trifles into the struggling mass, he finally, in a fit of enthusiasm, launched the huge bowl at his feet, and which was filled with broken ice, into the very midst of the combatants. A pistol-shot from some unknown hand instantly rewarded this sally, which, although it missed him, appeared to goad Lafayette to madness; for bottles, tumblers, all the articles on the shelves, and at last even the stools behind the bar, were promptly employed by him as projectiles. At the sound of fire-arms, Judge Skewer, with extreme alacrity, got over the counter and packed himself snugly beneath it, inviting his companions to do the same. But Messrs. Mayhem and Adder had already decamped for some other place of safety; while Messrs. Gallus and McCracken had become personally engaged in the combat.

As for Gifford, he made a rush for the door, whence he escaped, leaving the day still undecided; the last object he remembered seeing in his retreat being the lank form of Mr. Sloper standing on the counter, and, with a countenance perfectly immovable, hurling champagne-bottles into the middle of the fray.

CHAPTER III.

Hugh thought he had never seen Marian look so lovely as she did the next morning when he called after her return from Contracosta. Beautiful in his eyes she had ever been; but the coarse garb and the commonplace surroundings which were inevitable on the prairies or in the mines, if they could not destroy, were ill calculated to set off her beauty. Hugh saw her now for the first time under circumstances similar at least in some respects to those among which she had been born and bred. The picture was in something like its proper frame, and was no longer left to depend exclusively on the delicacy of its outlines and the richness of its coloring.

She wore a dress of some Chinese fabric, a pale lemon in hue, and over this a black net shawl. Her magnificent black hair was gathered in low, heavy folds to a simple knot behind, with no meretricious convolutions to disturb the harmony of her pure Greek profile. The olive cheek was tinged with a rosy flush, setting off to most bewitching advantage the inky, long eyelashes, and the beautiful eyes they protected; and the same cause that flushed the cheek had set the bust heaving in a manner that no less fair proportions could have counterfeited. The lips, always so like coral, were as charming as ever; the nose as delicate and as suggestive of high breeding. The step too, so light, so fawn-like as it always was, did not even fall upon Gifford's sense, eager as he was to hear it, so that indeed she had to speak before he knew of her presence.

Hugh had been shown into a back drawing-room rather richly furnished in the French taste, and opening by windows which descended to the floor upon a vine-shaded piazza without. Through these vines far away, melting and fading into sky at the horizon, stretched the blue Pacific. I think most of us regret that gloriously placid ocean who have left it, as we deem, to see it no more. The contrast with the angry, boisterous Atlantic is so very strong, the breezes which ruffle its smooth surface are for the most part so gentle yet so refreshing, as compared with the east winds and dismal fogs we have known too much of near home, that we sigh to think the change was but for a time, and that we have returned perforce to the old inhospitalities. But Hugh's thoughts were not fixed on such contrasts as these. He

was thinking in how short, how very short a time—eight and forty hours perchance—Marian would be sailing away on this glittering element, sailing away from all those friends with whom she had crossed the plains, sailing away from him, Hugh, on whose life she had wrought so great a change, sailing away to return no more forever!

Alas for human hopes, and human faith! Who of us shall say that we will do this or that—which shall dare to echo the boast of the impious conqueror when speaking of his purposes, "*Je dis c'est moi qui propose et c'est moi aussi qui dispose*," in the teeth of bitter experience, and knowing how inevitably we have each our petty Moscows as a crown and end of our best digested plans, our most cherished hopes! What schemes, what lofty resolves, what unalterable determinations have melted, dissolved, vanished like wreaths of vapor, before even a tinier assault than lay in those musical words which broke at once Hugh's trance and the surrounding silence:

"Won't you speak to me, Hugh?"

A bright smile broke over the young man's face, and the blood ran up to the roots of his hair like a girl's.

"Marian!" he exclaimed, and then rather awkwardly stopped.

"You hardly seem pleased to see me," continued she, "and yet it is more than three months since you have done so."

"Three years!" said Hugh, half unconsciously.

"Not quite so long," said Marian, laughing; "but that is meant for a compliment, I suppose. You were not used to pay me compliments."

"No."

"Won't you sit down? You were looking at the view, I see. It is pretty, but nothing to compare with what you get from the other side of the Bay."

"Ah!"

"It is quite lovely there. I've often been since I came to the city; and yesterday I went—with the children—for the last time."

"For the last time?" Hugh repeated mechanically.

"Surely. Don't you remember I sail Wednesday? How *distrait* you are!"

"*Distrait?*"

"You've uttered nothing but monosyllables, and so far from seeming glad to see me, you——"

"Marian!"

She stopped, and neither spoke for at least a minute. The truth is, Hugh was wrestling with all his might to suppress what

he feared each moment would escape him. This impassiveness, justly complained of, was the veriest mask that could be imagined, for the man's whole nature was stirred, and his heart was rocking and swaying in a storm which he feared every instant would bring it to shipwreck. How strange it is that men, ay, and women too, although not so often, will so generally misunderstand this sort of nature—will believe that this cold, reserved, self-contained exterior is the true exponent of that which lies below or within! From the moment those lustrous eyes of Marian's were fixed upon him, Hugh felt he was more and more in danger of ceasing to be master of himself. That which restrained him from throwing himself headlong at the girl's feet, and then and there pouring forth the wildest, the most overwhelming tale of passion, seemed so delicate, so fragile, that he marvelled then and afterwards that he did not throw down or overleap it. When they had been constantly together there had been far less risk of such an explosion. But the cruel void, the unspeakable vacuum Marian's departure had left behind he had now felt in all its bitterness, and his soul yearned to prevent its permanency. The shock of seeing her again was striking chords in his breast of exquisite melody transcendent harmony; was bringing back lovely scenery, delicious perfumes; all that seems most delightful in life, all that ever reconciles to its woes and cares, came back in a flood of intoxicating memory, as of things which he had regarded as passed away, dead forever, and yet they were here and alive again. And Virginia?

Yes, Marian was right, in that sense, in thinking as she wrote "it had been better otherwise." When she fulfilled her promise, however, she was only reckoning on her own strength, and thought nothing of any possible strain upon Hugh's. As for him, he kept on looking at the ocean, and then at the floor, and then, irresistibly impelled, at Marian again, and then fell thinking of honor and firmness, and Europe and Armstrong's Bar, and of how he ought to have undergone some process of purification before coming from the presence of Judge Skewer and Mr. Sloper into that of Marian; and then, all of a sudden, awoke to the consciousness that he was expected to say something.

"Yes, Miss Rooke, that is, Marian, you were very kind to write; and we are all very sorry to think you are going to leave California," he said, at last, in a measured, business-like tone; "and as it was necessary two of us should come down to the Bay—on another account—the coincidence was fortunate. Dr. Landale came down with me, and is also quite anxious to see you. He would have called this morning, but——"

Here he caught Marian's eyes; a look which turned the dissimulating drift of his sentence, and ended it in truth as it were with the force of destiny.

"——but that I devised a plan to induce him to wait till the afternoon," he finished desperately.

Marian laughed quite unsuspectingly. "I shall be very glad to see him. The Doctor is sometimes rough, but he is so straightforward, and, as I think, so trustworthy, that one cannot help respecting him. And how are all the others at the Bar? I had a letter or two from dear Kitty—short, though—and the last some weeks ago. Are they all well?"

"Yes—all well. Living the same life—seeing the same sights—hoping the same hopes—as when you left us."

"And you have been fortunate?"

"In gold-hunting, you mean? Not so much so as before. I don't know whether the charm lay in you or in Mr. Pangburn, but we have never done worse than in these last three months."

"So that you are becoming discontented again."

"Becoming? I am always discontented, I fear. You know, of course, I have nothing to do but to grind on to the end of the chapter. There is no chance for me in life—no hope—but that gold is its stepping-stone. So for gold I must e'en still work."

They had seated themselves on a Chinese sofa, placed conveniently on the piazza, and Marian had pulled off her gloves—for she had been walking in the garden, it seems,—and was propping them up mechanically in her lap, one against the other, as if they had fingers in them.

"You have doubtless frequently heard from Miss Chester—from Virginia?"

"Oh yes," muttered Hugh, a slight shiver running involuntarily through his frame; "several times since I saw you."

"She is well—and happy, I hope?"

"Here is her last letter," said Hugh, half offering it to Marian, as if thus best to answer her question. "It contains nothing which is indelicate for another—a friend—to read." he added, seeing a slight movement of rejection.

"I would rather not read it, please," said Marian, gently, but quite positively.

"Then I will read it—or parts of it—to you." And he did so, calmly and dispassionately, as if it were a paragraph from a newspaper. There might have been just a trace of irony here and there in passages which were least equivocal as to the paramount thoughts in the writer's mind, but only a trace. A shadow

came over Marian's brow as she listened, and when Hugh ended she looked somewhat pained.

"She has false lights—bad counsellors," she said, perceiving that Gifford looked for some criticism; "but you must undo all that. You will teach her higher views—nobler aims—and redeem her from the bad effects of this village gossip which surrounds her."

"And when am I to begin this work of reformation?"

"Begin? Now; at any, at all times. In your letters; you write to her, do you not?"

"Yes. Regularly, almost, since we came to the country; and you see with what effect."

"Ah, but have you striven to make a change—to divert her mind into new channels?"

"Have I a right to censure her for our common weakness—if it is one? To criticise the mote without seeking to cast out the beam? Why, it is on this point that we are most in sympathy. The similarity shows how well we are adapted for each other."

"This bitterness is misplaced on such a subject," said Marian, earnestly. "If I did not know you better, I should think you heartless. Your duty is plainly to elevate and improve, not to cavil or sneer at weaknesses wherein you admit you have yourself a share. What! Are we placed here to deal in such a spirit with characters whose growth is clearly, and for a wise purpose, entrusted to our care—characters which it is given us to nurture and foster even as if they were those of little children? Do you think so poorly of yourself that you do not feel strong enough—capable enough—to undertake such an obvious care, such a manifest duty?"

"Marian," answered Hugh, humbly and sadly, "it is easy for the prosperous to condemn the short-comings of the needy, and the world will never go backwards for the want of censure from those who have never felt the temptation to the crime they contemn. There is something wrong about me—radically wrong, I fear; and to be at fault in this one thing may be only one symptom of a pervading disease. I loathe the society in which I am placed—not the Armstrongs, or the others at the Bar, but the circles at large wherein my life has been passed in the years gone by—must be passed, I suppose, for those to come. This may be another sign of the same malady. What then? There have been discontented egotists before my time; like them I shall live, die, and be forgotten."

"You are wronging yourself now," said Marian, "this is also

mere bitterness, like the rest; and what has it to do with Virginia?"

"Only that I am asking charity; the charity a man seeks from those who can have never felt the ills which led to his fall. I can feel—although you may not quite think it—the felicity that may lie in teaching, guarding, training to nobler life and higher beauty, a certain favored being. I know how the doting mother can make for herself a paradise in merely hanging over the footsteps of her tottering child. I can feel that without this relation—that of parent and offspring—such happiness may be as great, such solicitude may be as tender. It is not hard to picture a man and a woman in such a light. She is young, lovely, and most engaging; but, through the accident of fortune, unenlightened, ignorant, perhaps even misdirected; and yet her character is full of the germs of nobleness and generosity, her intellect is stored with undeveloped ability. The man, with better opportunities, with more enlarged experience, devotes himself to the task of improving this charming being—of leading her to the utmost height of excellence which she is capable of attaining. How noble, how glorious such an undertaking! What happiness to watch, while tending, each shoot of perception, each bud of maturing intelligence! What rapture to find each year, each month, each day bringing forth its fruit of grateful symmetry and increasing excellence to cheer and reward his exertions! What bliss to behold at last a creature beautiful and perfect in soul as in body, and to feel that such an ideal work has been partly due to his own self-paying labors—his own happy toils! Think of the joy that Phidias or such as he have felt in the mere cold, speechless marble whence they have hewn their marvellous conceptions—and then compare it with his ecstasy who, as it were, has created intelligence instead of matter—a soul instead of a body!"

"Such a task, such a labor," exclaimed Marian with enthusiasm, "should be yours with Virginia."

"You forget," said Hugh, with averted face, "that to such a labor one thing is indispensable."

"Which is——"

"That it should be one of love," said Hugh, in a very low voice.

"Good heavens! you don't surely mean——"

"You do not understand me?"

"I hope I do not. I would not think of you as capricious or wilful; as forgetting good feeling, justice, honor. And yet——"

"And yet you would think all these were I to confess that I do not love Virginia Chester?"

"Indeed, I had rather believe that you were exaggerating or misstating, or misconceiving your true feelings; that you had been distressed by unpleasing foibles, perhaps, annoyed by traits which were rather reflected from others than natural to Virginia herself; and so that you were led to speak hastily and thoughtlessly; but that you wronged yourself and her in speaking so, and that in your heart of hearts you truly loved Virginia still."

Gifford turned and looked straight in Marian's eyes.

"Would you, Marian, would you indeed rather believe so?"

Could he himself have stood such a question and such a test! I doubt it. Was it the truth which came in response from Marian's lips? I doubt it. But what moralist can tell the nice distinctions between right and wrong in such a case? I cannot answer, and can only tell what Marian did and what she said; except I will aver that if she spoke falsely then, she never did before. There was a little rising in her throat, bravely choked, and she looked unfalteringly in Gifford's face and said:

"For your honor's sake I would indeed, Hugh Gifford."

There was a long pause again, and Hugh looked far out on the smiling blue sea and heaved a great sigh. And Marian occupied herself some time in smoothing her gloves out very assiduously on her knee. It was she who broke the silence and changed the subject in the dexterous fashion women have:

"And they are all well, you say, and going on in the same old way?"

"Yes; just the same."

"I wish to send them some things—some little keepsakes; you'll take them for me, will you not?"

"Oh yes, unquestionably."

"Two dresses, and one or two little tobacco-boxes and trinkets, and some books for Luke, and a collar for Lion," proceeded Marian, as if it were needful to give an inventory of her consignment.

"Books for Luke?"

"I promised them. He is ambitious, poor Luke, and, very worthily, wishes to improve himself."

"He *is* ambitious, I think," said Hugh, pointedly.

Marian colored. Could he suspect, she thought, the mournful scene before her departure? If he did, what matter? Only Marian somehow did not like to believe Hugh knew of Luke's attachment or the revelation of it.

"I saw him have a book of yours once," continued Hugh, "a little Testament."

"He has it now," said Marian, simply. Luke had indeed

begged the volume of her just after his rejection, and she h not the heart to refuse it. She would not have chosen to me tion the fact, but since he had made the allusion, she saw th Hugh would think her disingenuous if she withheld it, and l were afterwards by chance to see the book in Luke's possessio "He asked me for it before I left the Bar, and I gave it him.'

"And I," said Hugh, not without pique, "I am the only o to be left without a keepsake!"

"You are too hasty," replied Marian, laughing, "in comir to such a conclusion. You'll wait, please, until you get yo package before being quite so certain."

"With that hint I surely will, and fancy myself, as Lear sa of poor Cordelia, 'though last not least in your dear——'"

"Nay," interrupted Marian, with a quick impulse suppressin the coming word, "I have no such wealth as the unhappy o king had to distribute."

"And so will escape an ungrateful return?"

"And have no need, I know, to purchase any return save th one which will be mine without guerdon—to be kindly remen bered."

"Only kindly, Marian?"

"Perhaps I might have said, 'affectionately.'"

"You might, indeed."

"I know well," continued Marian, thoughtfully, "how ver fortunate I was, alone and helpless, with none to speak in m behalf, and appearances, perhaps, rather against me—how ver fortunate to chance among such kind friends as the Armstrong proved to be. I can never forget good Uncle Seth's trustin fatherly confidence—shown from the very first—or worthy Mr Armstrong's quaint, bustling kindness; or dear Kitty's simpl hearted love, fond and clinging as a sister's."

"And Luke?"

"He has a heart of gold, Hugh. Rustic and untutored as h is, I don't think there breathes an honester spirit—a more guile less nature. But all were good to me; even blunt, rough Dick who always wanted me for a confidante in his addresses t Kitty. And as to poor Ichabod and his inseparable companion I have felt as if leaving them for ever in this manner were lik leaving part of one's self behind."

They were both looking seaward, and, as they gazed on th glittering expanse, the boom of a gun rolled solemnly in to th land, and the next moment a long, black steamship glide swiftly into sight, making straight for the Heads, the portals o the Golden Gate.

"Marian," cried Gifford suddenly, "why go at all? we were all very happy together at the Bar, and none of us are sure to be so elsewhere. None could have ever been more discontented than I had been in my previous life, but there—at least when *you* were there—I was nearer to happiness than ever before. You have blamed me for restlessness in wishing to quit it; and yet you do so for less reason. As to independence, none can be more truly independent than those who, like you, give far more than they take. Think of the many happy hours you have passed there, Marian. Think of the old walk by the river, and the dear little lake perched up among the hills; think of the many kind souls who loved and valued you so highly, and whom you were always in return teaching and improving; think of the seclusion, the placid content, the unbroken peace we all enjoyed shut out from the jars, the clamorings, the heartburnings of the world. Ah, Marian, will you find better friends, will you find securer shelter than in that little nest of ours, all homely as it is? Will you find solace, when care and pain perchance shall come and seek you amid strangers, in the thought that you have thus needlessly been tempted to fly away and abandon it? Marian, dear Marian, give up this wild scheme of wandering forth alone over the earth; give it up, and gladden all our hearts by going back *home* with me to the Bar!"

Marian's color came and went as he spoke, her lips parted eagerly, and the white teeth behind them seemed clenched as if in resistance to an impulse which strove hard for mastery. Why was it that this man whom she had sought to purify and exalt should now be urging her to that which conscience taught her to be wrong? And yet how was it that she should censure him thus when he must be ignorant of her strongest motives for resistance? Alas! she was far better than Hugh, for he had yielded in a burst of wild impulsive selfishness to the same temptation that she in her purity was proof against.

"No, Hugh," she answered quietly and steadily, "no, that cannot be;—do not urge it. It pains me much, very much. Pray speak of it no more."

"And we who remain," he exclaimed almost angrily, "*our* pain, you think nothing of that!"

She turned her eyes full upon him with a mournful expression that made Gifford hate himself for the temper of his speech, and yearn to go down on his knees again for pardon's sake, as he had yearned to do before for adoration's.

"You do not think that, Hugh, although you say it; you will be sorry for it when I am gone."

He caught up the delicate little hand which lay on her lap toying nervously with its glove, and—he had never even approached the doing such a thing before—he pressed upon it one single, passionate kiss. She drew it gently away with something of surprise, and, as she did so, their eyes met, and Marian shivered from head to foot as if sickened with a sudden chill. For at that instant she became possessed of a secret such as Hugh himself discovered on the night he saw Luke with Marian's Testament.

"You must leave me now," she said, with a half bewildered, half frightened air. "We shall meet again before I sail. That is, perhaps you will call once again—to get the parcels, you know. I—I—don't like sending you away, but there is a great deal to do and ——"

"I go, Marian," said Hugh, relieving her evident embarrassment; "only don't let me go thinking I have offended you."

"Oh, no, no," she replied; "the time is too short for any offences to be given—or taken."

And that was all. I have been wrong, thought Hugh, uneasily, as he went down the steps, very wrong, and hasty as a spoilt child. And yet, he murmured to himself, I should have thought she would have shown more feeling. Wise judges these men often are! Could he at that moment have looked into poor Marian's little chamber, he would have seen her stretched on the bed, weeping her heart out in a passion of desperate, sickening tears.

CHAPTER IV.

"This is not precisely a model city," said Gifford, when the Doctor and he compared notes as to their discoveries and experiences.

"It is a very charming spectacle," quoth the Doctor, complaisantly, "of our dear democracy run mad. I must confess they have been entirely consistent here, and have by no means done things by halves. It is a picture in little of the great republic, with a slight exaggeration in details necessary to bring out the whole force of the subject. It is a thorough-going attempt to demonstrate the possibility of making a pyramid stand upon its apex with a heaven-kissing base; and to tell you the

truth, I for one would rather be anywhere else when the experiment is just at its poising acme, for, whoever is hurt, those below are sure to be."

"The gold discovery," returned Hugh, willing to find an excuse for a state of things which yet was as repulsive to himself as to his companion, "brought quickly to the place not only many of the most enterprising, but a great number of the most lawless of our eastern population. It seems the inevitable fate of new countries. Virginia and the Carolinas were largely populated, you know, by thieves and cut-throats; and, more lately, so have been your settlements in Australia. To be sure, in these cases, expatriation was involuntary, but the result appears to be a common one. Men who have forfeited social position at home are very naturally led to flock to a country where social distinctions are as yet unknown."

"Ay, but," argued the Doctor, "it's just that of which I complain. There are people of education here, people of breeding and character; men who have all the knowledge, if they had only the will, to bring matters to a more creditable pass, to put down the disgraceful scenes we see all around us, to make the community, in a word, a respectable one. There are such people, and with such a capacity; but here, as in the Atlantic States, *they won't exert it.* They lie down supinely, and allow the very scum of the earth to ride over them rough-shod—suffer them to make their city a bye-word and a jeer for the civilized world—just because they think of nothing but making money, and are too lazy or too cowardly to apply the necessary remedies."

"There has been so little time," extenuated Hugh: "we can't fairly blame men for not acting before they've had time to turn round."

"Perhaps not. And there is, moreover, the blissful consolation that it can't last. In a very large city like New York, the Irish mob—pugilists, dramsellers, and gamblers—may have their way for a longer space, because their abuses are not so glaringly conspicuous, and there are some little—unhappily very little—but still some preorganized social adjustments which they cannot utterly defy and overthrow. But here they are first on the ground—here they come in with the conqueror; and hence they're safe to run so rampant that a struggle is inevitable, wherein either they or all other classes in the community must succumb. This is the true goal of *sans culotteism*, and the only pity is that when the example comes, the rest of the country won't profit by it."

"'Twill come on a larger scale in good time," said Gifford,

thoughtfully; "we are fast getting to the extremest limit of practical democracy, and I believe all historical precedents warrant the theory that, once having reached that limit, the scale must begin to gravitate the other way. But you must admit that, whatever the evils you find in our system—universal manhood suffrage, election of judges, licentiousness of the press, the elevation of ignorant or depraved men to power—you must allow that the most injurious effects are largely due to immigrants from your own islands. There is nothing in the American system, so far as it touches those matters, which need have been altered or amended for years to come, had it been applicable to Americans alone. You predict a social convulsion in this very little city; such a necessity would be obviated, or would never have existed, if the adventurers consisted exclusively of natives of the country. The turbulent, the vicious, the Red Republicans, the proposers and fomenters of fire and sword for every European country which lives under a monarchy, are almost to a man foreigners, and generally subjects of the very countries whose institutions they are so anxious to subvert."

"Ay, they want to make all the other foxes cut off their tails, and so they may in good time; but only to go through the natural process that you Americans will first set the example of doing—that of persuading them to grow again."

"Perhaps so; for it seems that there is a predestined round of national vicissitudes which, sooner or later, none are to escape. But, in the mean time, I honestly believe that with all her defects there is much in America which is truly excellent, encouraging, and instructive to mankind."

"And so do I," said the Doctor heartily; "and so will most men, east or west, who are not more anxious to serve party than to serve truth. But so long as our English conservatives swear that the republic is all bad, and our English radicals vow that it is all good—whilst amid their eternal racket no more reasonable voices can be heard—it will be very hard for untravelled men to get at a really fair notion of the facts. And what complicates the matter more is, that your own parties on this side are always playing into the hands of the parties on the other that hate them best."

"There is nothing left in such a dilemma," observed Hugh, "but to neutralize the mischief-makers and promote good will by the constant encouragement of education and intelligence."

"Just so," assented the Doctor, "and to bear witness to facts as you see them in both countries without reserve, and especially as against the interested or partisan propagation of false-

hoods. To speak the truth at all times without fear or favor, and stick to it."

"Amen," said Hugh, as they strolled into the Plaza.

CHAPTER V.

The day, which had opened so bright and fairy-like, became dark and lowering as it grew older. The air, which had been so clear and elastic, became dense and oppressive. The coloring, all blue and gold, which Hugh and Marian had admired so much in the morning, was replaced by gray and lead. Great black clouds came rolling and overlapping each other in from the sea, and heavy drops, like skirmishers' musketry, heralded the approach of the storm. Sudden and violent gusts of wind, which would often lay low many a tent on the neighboring hillsides, tore through the streets, ripping off signs, and threatening to prostrate the fragile edifices to which they were attached. The rainy season was beginning, and this was but a specimen of many a gay and laughing morning it would bring, to be followed by a morose and scowling noon, and a desperately tempestuous night. By-and-by the water would pour down in torrential floods, penetrating every roof, making impassable every street, transforming the town almost into a lake. These cataracts would descend the live-long night without cessation, and the stranger would be astonished, on looking forth in the morning, to see again the smiling, treacherous blue, the bay without a ripple, and the air without a sigh.

The Doctor and Gifford had sought shelter in one of the palaces of pleasure on the square, where, as might have been expected, they soon fell in with Judge Skewer and Mr. Sloper. The latter had a huge black patch over one eye, which by no means contributed to the prepossessing effect of his appearance, and the Judge had a generally swollen air, which led Hugh to think he must have kept on drinking ever since he last saw him, an impression not far from the truth.

"The Yorkers has licked," he exclaimed, exultingly, to Hugh, and the Sydney Ducks ain't nowhere. Two on 'em had their bs stove in, and Belcher Gay's got one eye aout and the other the water-bucket. I've put Tom on my *com*mittee, Major, id as soon as he finds time to git sober he's goin' in for Skewer

and Liberty. Lafe's a nice-lookin' article, ain't he? He fire one bottle too many, that's the hull on't, and some cuss fired back and belted him over the head."

"And I've got my eye on him," added Lafe, turning his hea on one side, and fixing it on the Doctor with awful malevolence "and the pieces inter which he will be redooced when I git right fair chance to whittle air exceedin' small."

"But really," said Gifford, with a faint idea that the provoca tion given by Mr. Sloper might be presumed to justify that ap peal to the law of retaliation which had evidently been resorte to, "you might have expected an attack, standing on the coun ter as you did, and pelting both sets of combatants, and——"

"When there air a Time," interrupted Mr. Sloper, with grave superiority, "them kind o' chicken fixins is counted in, and there ain't no back action."

"The Public," expounded the Judge, with Eldonian deliber ation, "bein' in a free country, reserves the right to sail in and add to the pervadin' hilarity in a gineral way, knives and shoot ers bein' barred. A princerple," he added, perceiving that his ruling was accepted with some doubt by a portion of his audi ence, "which has its origin in the idee that sech folks purchases immoonity by voluntary contributions to the great sum of hu man enj'yment."

"And aidin' in the pursoot of happiness the industrious por tion of the risin' generation," said Mr. Sloper.

"Meanwhile," continued Judge Skewer, "this court doesn't recolleck the distinguished feller-citizen it sees afore it. Major Gifford, I'll permit *you* to interdoose. *Vamos.* Purceed."

"Oh," said Hugh, "I beg pardon, I'm sure. This, Judge, is my friend and co-laborer, Doctor Landale. Doctor Landale, Judge Skewer. Mr. Lafayette Sloper, Doctor Landale; a dis tinguished physician, engineer, and naturalist."

"I'm tickled to know ye," condescended Mr. Sloper, changing his eye on the Doctor, "although ye air what some folks thinks a leetle *on*nateral, bein' a Britisher; but I'm tickled to know ye."

"A Britisher!" echoed the Judge, pausing in the muscular process of hand-shaking, and holding the Doctor at arm's length; "a Britisher!" he repeated, scrutinizing him with the curiosity and interest he would have bestowed on some strange phenomenon. "Not a Duck, and yit not naturalized?" he con tinued, doubtfully.

The Doctor explained that he had never been in Australia, and was unfortunately equally far, for the present, from being

American citizen; whereupon the Judge drew a large pocket-
ıdkerchief, wiped his shining red face, took off his hat, pushed
:k his moist golden hair, and proceeded in an exalted key:
"Air you from that onhappy and down-trodden land? Be
u the subjick of a remorseless tyrant? Hev you been a goin'
and down the airth grindin' and stompin' on the poor, or hev
ıu been one o' the poor, and got ground and stomped on your-
lf?"

The Doctor blandly described his social position at home as
ıving been equally removed from either category; but could
ɔt resist adding that, from what he had learned, more people
ıd been "stomped" on in the place they were in of late, than
ɔ had ever heard of as being subjected to the process in his na-
ve land.

"Ah!" said the Judge, with compassion, "that's 'cause them
oated minions of a tyrant's power keep things so dreffal dark.
hey're afeard an outraged and long-sufferin' people will rise in
eir wrath and hurl 'em in the dust. It's quite nateral. You
in't got no free and independent press like our'n, hev ye,
ɔw?"

"Why," admitted the Doctor, "not precisely like yours, per-
ıps; but it's progressing fast, and I think may fairly be said
some respects to rival it. Our newspapers are as large as
ɔurs, they are fast getting as cheap, and will soon, therefore,
ecome as personal."

"The more cheap and the more personal they git to be," re-
ırned the Judge, "the better the chance for the sufferin' masses.
What's wanted is that the misdeeds of them that sit in high
laces should be dug aout, and held up to the light in all their
idjus deformity. And when the people's quit respectin' their
ulers, they'll naterally take more to respectin' theirselves; bein'
he true aim of good government, and the hull duty of man."

With this parenthetical protest against the institutions of
Britain, Judge Skewer immediately became extremely cordial to
ıer representative, and insisted upon his joining him in a glass
f champagne then and there, which the Doctor, willing to
hange the subject, readily agreed to.

"I'm aware," said the Judge, assuming an air of great famil-
arity with English domestic habits, as the party made their way
o the bar, "that your folks don't drink nuthin' but beer, and
hat 'ere thick muck ye call porter; but bein', as we air, the de-
cendants of a common mother, p'raps we can jine for once in
ıe same milk."

This sentiment commanding general acquiescence, the spark-

ling beverage was soon forthcoming and disposed of, whereupon the Judge with great alacrity ordered another bottle, which, in spite of their remonstrances, he almost forced his guests to consume. "I'm cock o' the walk," he affirmed; "this here's my dunghill, and I kin do all the crowin';" a metaphor whereby he meant to convey that no one else should offer to pay for the wine previously or thereafter to be drunk in the place.

"The Gin'ral," exclaimed Judge Skewer, as he warmed with the second bottle, and, having promoted Hugh successively through the intermediate grades, gazed at him with affectionate enthusiasm, "The Gin'ral's one o' my boys, he is; and to-night it's my intention to hist the rag, and show him and our distinguished British feller-citizen here, a boundin', riotous old elephant, and nothin' shorter."

The company was augmented at this point by the arrival of Messrs. Gallus and McCracken, the former with his arm in a sling, and the latter with a bandage about his head, and the Judge at once became highly interested in the recital of their exploits and the condition of their wounds. Mr. Sloper went a little distance from the group to where a large earthen vase stood on the counter, from which he extracted a mass of fine-cut tobacco, which he stuffed into his mouth. Catching Hugh's eye while engaged in this operation, he beckoned him to approach, and on that gentleman's complying, Lafayette whispered in his ear:

"I hain't got no bet on the Britisher, and he kin do as he likes; but don't *you* git to playin' keards with the Judge to-night, that's all."

"Ih Why?" asked Hugh, who, without any idea of doing so, was curious as to the reason for the prohibition.

"Why? 'Cause if ye do, the chances are he'll skin ye alive; and if he happened to lose, jest as like's not he'd knife ye; and whar would ye be either way? I tell ye, so's ye can watch how the critter works, and draw out when there's a good chance. The Judge is a smashin' good feller, but keards is his lay. He's smarter on 'em than greased lightnin'; likewise he is a two-edged sword, cuttin' both friend and foe. So don't blame me if ye run agin him."

"I never play," said Hugh; "but thank you all the same."

"Folks air up to all kinds o' capers they never do," replied Sloper, philosophically, "when they git enough champagne into 'em. My idee is, to wind up the evenin's amusements at Steve Whipple's. You hev' there a square game, a nice supper, and fewer of the roughs than at these here open institutions."

"In other words, a hell conducted on aristocratic principles?"

Mr. Sloper frowned. "There ain't nuthin' aristocratic' bout it onless it's givin' credick to likely buckers when they run aout o' tin. The pint is, that up to Steve's they turn for too much money for free fightin' to pay. Consequently it's wuth his while to allow somethin' to the shoulder-hittin' boys to stay away."

An animated discussion here arose from an attempt on the part of the Doctor to make his escape, having, as he alleged, important letters to write and further purchases to effect of necessaries to take back to the Bar. But the Judge was in that state of mind that he had become extremely obstinate, and he coolly declared that if either the General or his British fellow-citizen wanted to leave, they would have to fight him, Skewer, as an indispensable precedent; and that, so far at least as that night was concerned, it was his intention to live and die with them. In vain did the Doctor plead his engagements, backed by the corroborating testimony of Gifford. "You air in a minority, gentlemen," said the Judge, appealing to Sloper, Gallus, and M'Cracken; "and in this here free country minorities has no rights the majorities are bound to respeck."

"But at least," urged the Doctor, "the majority will allow us to go and get our dinners?"

"The majority," pronounced the immovable Skewer, "will dine along with ye; and from this decision there is no appeal."

The rain was falling in torrents, and there really seemed nothing better for it than to accept the Judge's proposal that the party should dine together at a celebrated French restaurant hard by; a conclusion to which Hugh and the Doctor soon came. Nor did they find cause, in a gastronomical sense, to regret their acquiescence, since the cuisine and the wines were found to be altogether superior to any they had seen in California. The market of San Francisco is now famous for its variety and abundance; and even in the day we write of, its fish and game, served by French cooks and washed down by French wines, were conceded even by fastidious travellers to be exceptionally meritorious for so new and so savage a country. Once at table, the Judge made great efforts to be agreeable, and if he did not in the very fullest sense succeed, it is but fair to acknowledge that he was often highly amusing. He gave a graphic account of the first discoveries of the gold; showed by what curious vagaries of fortune all those who were first on the ground, and who might have rivalled or surpassed Rotchschild in the vastness of their possessions, had been swindled or cajoled out of their property, or had been so dazzled by its sudden acquisition that their heads

gave way, and they took to systematic gambling or drinking, o more frequently, to both. and so ended in utter ruin. He to wondrous stories of people who never before had a second coa arriving here and becoming millionaires in a month; of othe who brought capital carefully hoarded by fathers and uncles an employers at home, and sent out to found a business under the au spices of the steady ones who were never known before to tak a glass of wine, to win or lose sixpence at play, or to loo askance at a pretty girl; and how in six months the capital wa all in the faro banks, and the steady ones hopelessly engulfed i the lowest depths of dissipation. He described the extraordinar adventures of Johnny Byng, who "tapped" all the great bank of Sacramento in one night, and came down and was himself tap ped at Whipple's in another; of how, on being again staked b an old partner, he had gone up into the interior, and returned i six weeks with three hundred thousand dollars; and how Doc et's bank had agreed to let him stake two hundred thousand d it on a single card; and how Johnny lost; but took his oth hundred thousand safely home, settled down on a farm i New Jersey, and never gambled more. Then he declared th John C. Fremont was the richest landowner in the world; an on some faint mention of the names of Westminster and Bu cleuch from the Doctor, swore that the Mariposa property alo was worth more than double the possessions of both those fort nate noblemen put together. The question of property sugges ed the histories of all manner of lucky tinkers and tailors an what not who had come here miserably poor, and who, b marrying their washerwomen or being "agents" for somebod had grown to be stupendously rich. It appeared remarkable ho often these two rather curious methods of rising in the world h been adopted by wily adventurers as young Ambition's ladde But when washing was twenty-four dollars a dozen, and re estate went up cent-per-cent in a month, the *modus operandi* m be easily imagined. The Judge was quite right when he cite in illustration of the mutability of fortune, the cases of Yank snips and pedlers, who used to "cut and make trousers for t shillings a pair, trimmings in," or go about pot-mending, an who to-day swelled in Montgomery Street, the lords of hundre vara* lots, and snivelled through their now supercilious nos about "my property."

When Gifford heard about these cases, and many more li them, he groaned in spirit. Of what use was his education, h

* VARA. The unit of land measurement, being a fraction less than a yard, establis by the original settlers of Spanish origin.

ught, his reading, his refinement, if tinkers and tailors grasped
prizes which all these acquisitions would not enable him to
n? Indeed, why should men be educated at all, since it was
arly unnecessary to gold-winning, and only made them un-
ppy when they found that those who had it not so often out-
ipped them in the race in spite of the deficiency? Why edu-
te at all in a country where money is the only god, the sole
ject of pursuit, the goal of every aspiration? California was,
cially speaking, the mere focalization of the entire country;
d the more tinkers and tailors made fortunes, and the more
ntlemen or educated men lost or failed to win them, the sooner
ould the great democratic ideal be attained. Such were Hugh's
oughts and inferences; but the Doctor, who always seemed
dicially inclined when the current of deduction appeared to be
nning all one way, struck in at a favorable moment, and affirm-
d that the contrasts between desert and success—capacity and
ck—were quite as sharply defined in Australia as in California;
d that for that matter money-worship was gaining proselytes
ry swiftly in Old England herself. So that although he did
t expect to see the day when, as he had heard was sometimes
e case in the States, a careful investigation and inventory of a
an's real and personal property were necessary preliminaries to
is being pronounced eligible for admission to certain social
oteries, he thought it quite possible the next generation might.

"Well," inquired Judge Skewer, "ain't that about right arter
l? If you kin keep on improvin' and improvin' and follerin'
ur glorious example, and thus accordin' to the laws of nater a
ttin' down all distinctions between man and his brother man
'cept money, which seems to be a kind o' Providential exception,
n't it stand to reason that bime bye ye'll git to the same proud
ltitood, and measure men by their dollars as ye now measure
dgers by their inches? Seems to me there aint no way aout
n't, and that that 'ere idee will jest hev to superstruct the Uni-
rsal Platform."

The Doctor readily subscribed to this probability, and although
ere might have been some differences between the Judge and
imself as to its advantages, their discussion was happily avoided,
d the banquet proceeded in the utmost harmony. "Consider-
'," observed Mr. Sloper, "as your friend is a Britisher, we
em to hitch hosses pooty clever; and it would be an awful
od spekerlation for that 'ere little island to send over a few
ousand 'cute chaps every year, with their eye teeth cut same
his'n, so's to pick up right idees 'bout our glorious instertoo-
ons."

Messrs. Gallus and McCracken had, in the meanwhile, mented the advantage of their superior natural capacities by ing in vigorous silence, so that they had far outstripped companions in the demolition of rather more than their sha the viands. Copious draughts of fiery whiskey, which the clared to be infinitely preferable to "that sour French swill," washed down their food, and had been followed in turn by gi tic plugs of tobacco, which almost answered the purpose of g since if either of them were addressed it was observed that time elapsed, and much preliminary extrusion of saliva inte ed, before he was in a safe condition to reply. These ge men now began to rasp their feet uneasily on the floor, to significantly at each other, and to otherwise express discor with their present monotonous surroundings; and the Judg last satisfied their yearning souls by suddenly rising, announ that this court was now adjourned, and that it was time to t about chasing the eagle. "Steve's?" interrogated Sl "Steve's," responded the Judge; and having paid the bill, w he insisted upon doing, and silenced remonstrance by swe that he'd draw on any man who tried to quit the crowd whole party made swift march through the rain, until reached the doorway of the renowned "Steve," then the p of the "sporting" fraternity in the golden city.

The establishment to which our friends now sought admitt was perhaps the most sumptuously furnished which could been found in that day on the Pacific coast. Rooms and cases were covered by the richest carpetings, into which the sank noiselessly, and which, to the eye, were mossy ban flowers. The walls were hung in the costliest manner in va delicate tints set off by slender threads of gold; and there paintings upon them which, if of smaller size, were of far hi grade than those in the garish saloons of the square. The ings were elegantly frescoed, and there depended from tasteful chandeliers whose lights were softened by ground shades of a curious and unique pattern. The furniture was e of rosewood or of solid, unpolished black walnut, and the boards of some of the rooms blazed with utensils not of alone but of the more precious metal. In the apartment adjoining that which guests first entered, a supper table wa whose appointments the most fastidious must have appr The linen, the plate, the glass, were unexceptionable. flowers which formed centres for the principal groups wer quisite in colors and in perfume. The wines, whether o sorts standing in the coolers or otherwise disposed, gave

sign of excellence; and such of the viands as were served cold, such as game, fowls, galantines, and the like, intrinsically, as well as in respect of garniture, afforded similar evidences of their quality. In effect there was nothing which money could buy which was not lavishly bestowed to add to the fascinations of the scene. Nor was it difficult to obtain admission for the free enjoyment of these pleasures. Whatever afforded presumptive evidence that the applicant was not absolutely without cash seemed to be sufficient to insure his welcome, provided he were known or introduced by some one who was. On the present occasion, the decorous black who officiated as Cerberus in a small hall between the street and an inner door, recognized Judge Skewer with a respectful grin, and passed his companions without inquiry or comment; and, after ascending a broad and easy staircase, they found themselves in what appeared to be the principal hall of play.

The door to this apartment which opened on the passage was ajar, and no one mounting the stairs would have supposed from the silence that some twenty persons were in it. Such, however, was the fact. A long green table ran about half the length of one side of the room, and around it sat a group of men almost as speechless as if they constituted a meeting of Friends. A very handsome hale-faced man, with snowy fingers and diamond rings, sat behind the table and dealt cards from a silver box. Before him were ranged the thirteen cards of a single suit, firmly pasted to the cloth; and on these cards were piles of round checks or chips made of bone or ivory of different colors and sizes, and which represented various sums, from a dollar to five hundred. There were also gold coins here and there, the bank freely accepting bets in actual money as well as in its representations. Moreover there were one or two pieces of paper lying on or between certain cards; these were checks on local banks staked by persons whose responsibility was known or approved by the banker. On his right was a handsome box in which were disposed coin, checks, and a great many additional packs of cards. Next this again were symmetrical piles of the "chips," which were sold to any intending player, and redeemed at his pleasure when he chose to desist. Beside the banker there sat an assistant whose duty it was to overlook the game and see that no mistakes, intentional or other, should occur to the disadvantage of the concern. Sometimes the banker would name the cards when he turned them as they alternately lost and won; but there was scarcely any other sound, save the slight noise made by the falling cards, to break a silence which was almost oppressive.

The pervading stillness had its effect upon even the boisterous spirit of Judge Skewer, and it was quite in a whisper that he said to the Doctor as they advanced into the room, "Don't hev' nuthin' o' this kind on your benighted sile, I reckon!" and with a considerable affectation of courtliness that he bowed to one or two of the company, who were sufficiently interested in the new comers to raise their eyes. Most of them were absorbed—transfixed—their whole souls speaking through their eyes, which were glued to some particular bit of pasteboard on the table before them. These men were of a better class than most of those in the public resorts. Well dressed, chiefly—some with reverend white hair, many who had all the outer appearance of gentlemen—these were of the merchants, lawyers, and bankers of the rising city. It was noticeable that the person who was dealing was gentlemanly, almost distinguished in his bearing; and Doctor Landale, with his old-world experience, thought he had never seen one of his profession whose manners so little betrayed his calling. Notwithstanding his being so actively engaged, this man had a ready word and a courteous smile for his fresh customers.

"Good evening, Judge—your servant, Marshall—quite well, Mr. McCracken?—most happy, I'm sure—Ace loses, Jack wins—friends, too, most welcome—a split ten—Antony, chairs for the gentlemen—I pay the deuce—chips, Judge?—Oh yes, plenty of room—fifty and the coppered bet are seventy-five—thank you, sir—Ace loses again—a bad ace and a dead king."

The Doctor and Hugh followed the example of their conductor, and bought a few of the tempting symbols. A man was really ashamed, as they both thought, to go into a place like that and not pay a trifle towards its enormous cost; it was to such a delicate sentiment as this that the bank was monthly indebted for solid thousands. Meanwhile the Judge planted himself on the left hand and next to the dealer, whom he accosted as "Leonidas," and Messrs. Gallus and McCracken having sandwiched themselves into eligible positions, the game proceeded with increased spirit and interest. Presently Leonidas made some *sotto voce* statement to his neighbor.

"Show!" admired Skewer.

"Fact," affirmed the dealer.

"How long?"

"Forty-eight hours at four o'clock to-day—nothing on the queen—and five makes fifty-three."

"That's an awful long sittin'. (I'm goin' on that queen agin if I bust.) And how do they propel respectin' grub and rum?"

"Why, Antony and Pomp keep them going. The pot coppered for all, gentlemen? All right, now I understand it. There's a regular express between François in the kitchen and Number Five, Judge, and that's the way of it. All down? Four loses, five wins."

From such words as the preceding it became apparent to any one who, like Gifford and the Doctor, took notice of them, that a remarkable *seance* was in progress at the room called by the dealer Number Five; and, as successive hints revealed the details, they became cognizant of the interesting fact that General Snagge, Governor Bragge, and Judge Quagge had been gambling together at poker there, since some time the day before yesterday; during which interval a hundred thousand dollars had changed hands, and six dozen of champagne been emptied.

Having mastered this piece of intelligence, our two friends were both highly edified by the rapidity with which their modest little capitals of twenty-five dollars each were melting away in the chances of the game. Presently Hugh had but five left and the Doctor eight.

"Confidence," said Leonidas blandly, "confidence wins the game. Might as well bet a hundred as one, and double each time you lose. Must win at last. Nine and seven, I see, sir; and a nine loses, seven wins is a stand-off."

"The nine's a case," said Judge Skewer, "and I'm a goin' to back it with all my bones."

Here Mr. Sloper, who for some reason had detached himself from the party on entering the house, stalked into the apartment.

"I like to git posted," he explained in an undertone as he squeezed himself into a seat next to Hugh, "as to what folks is a doin' of 'bout the premises; and there's the gol-darndest, three-storied, ground-and-lofty poker fight *pro*gressin' in the sky parlor as I ever heerd tell on; likewise I've riz a stake by a small dicker in cigars."

"Back the nine, Lafe," suggested the Judge. "Only one on 'em in, and I've jest dumped my hull pile on it."

"That bein' the case," responded Mr. Sloper, "I reckon I'll hev to copper. It runs agin my style to bet agen the bank when it's turnin' for a hull pile."

As the speaker put a little Chinese or Japanese coin on his stake, which implied that he backed the card to *lose*, a dark man who had a considerable sum also on the nine, did the same thing just an instant before the dealer turned.

"Five loses—Jack wins. All down? Six loses, queen wins."

"Cuss that queen," anathematized the Judge; "I left her jest at the wrong time."

"Ace loses, deuce wins. Nine loses, queen wins."

"Two hunderd on the deal," lamented Skewer. "That comes o' you copperin' my bet, Lafe. Don't do it agin, now, or I'll git sassy."

"This takes the five and seven," said the dark man, laying down a hunderd dollars on a corner of the five.

"Very good, sir. Two turns more in, gentlemen, or three. Five loses, seven wins; a stand-off, Mr. Du Solle. All ready? Why, Antony, where are you going with that brandy?"

"Judge Quagge, sir, he sick o' de dam wishy-washy, sody-mead wine. He say de General and de Gubenor make him nervous wid it, so's to shaken him grip."

"Give him my compliments—Mr. Darrell's compliments—and tell him to try a little absinthe. Four loses, ace wins. Nothing like absinthe after a heavy siege. Eight loses, seven wins. You're beating us heavily this deal, Mr. Du Solle."

The dark man smiled but said nothing, and Mr. Sloper promptly coppered the seven, thinking that next time it was likely to lose.

"No use buckin' agen luck," groaned Judge Skewer; "how do *you* stand, Marshal?"

"Two hundred in."

"Jest lend us a hunderd, then, and I'll see if I can't fetch up on the next box. You're bitter water to-night, Lonny, you are."

"The fortune of war, Judge. We can't always win, you know. The bank's out heavily on the week."

"Is that so? What does Steve say to that?"

"What does he care?" said Leonidas, carelessly; "with five hundred thousand ahead since the first of May."

"Five hunderd thousand ahead! Seems to me if I had that I'd jest shet pan and slope for hum!"

"Home's a fool to this place; and he'd rather run the bank and lose than knock off altogether. New deal, gentlemen. All ready now for a lively turn. What'll you take, Judge? Come, gentlemen, give your orders. Pomp, take the gentlemen's orders."

"Yis, sar!"

"Nine champagnes, four brandy and water, three whiskey neat, two sherries, two soda cocktails, two midnight warblers, one iced water! And a box of cigars!"

"Yis, sar."

"Give me some more chips, Lonny. I'll make a break this time, or spill my heart's best blood!"

"All right, Judge. Twenty-five, fifty, seventy-five, and a hundred."

A tremendous yell here rang through the upper part of the house, followed by cries of apparent remonstrance and expostulation.

"What the devil's that?" cried half-a-dozen voices.

"Don't be alarmed, gentlemen," said Leonidas, with his perpetual suave smile. "Nothing broke, I dare say. Watch the game, Augustus. Now, Antony, what is it?"

"Judge Quagge, sir, him have jest little tech of the man wid the poker arter him; and Gineral Snagge and Governor Bragge and Massa Steven they are jest a sittin' on him little while, till he stop him shakin'!"

"Oh, that's all, is it? Shouldn't have taken the brandy. This is *my* bitters, gentlemen," said the dealer, showing his handsome teeth and tapping the tumbler of iced water beside him. "Here we go again! All ready and nobody left behind."

"Don't see what a man should hev the horrors fur," grumbled Sloper, morosely, "with only forty-eight hours trainin'. There's them down our way that case-hardened they don't see snakes under a week! I reckon *I* could travel four days, and I ain't much accaount."

"Ah," said Judge Skewer, pathetically, "it's these 'ere new ways as knocks the bottom out. Nater can't be expected to wrastle with this outlandish French muck like as when she had old Rye to lean agen. I kin drink champagne, I kin, and I like it; but I don't feel merself the man I was when I ante'd on whiskey straight and didn't go nuthin' better."

"King wins, five loses. Come down, gentlemen. Eight loses, tray wins. Tray loses, eight wins; a repeater backwards. King wins, five loses again; the cards are bewitched. You're winning fast enough this time, Judge!"

"On'y a hunderd, so fur. There's your money back, Malachi, and darned lucky you air to git it. Gin'rally speakin' I take thirty days for them debts. That man's goin' in heavy," continued the Judge, in an undertone to Gifford. "See! He's got five hunderd on the king to win a third time—a bad bet *I* call it, but then you can't tell nuthin' about old Pharaoh. There he goes, by thunder!"

"King loses, ten wins. Five hundred again, Mr. Du Solle?"

The dark man had not spoken before, nor did he move a muscle when he lost his late heavy bet; but he replied briefly to the dealer's question:

"A thousand, if you'll take the bet."

Leonidas hesitated. "Two hundred, cold, is the rule, you know, sir; and we've exceeded it several times; however, we'll take the bet for once. Shall I give you more checks, sir?"

"I've no more money. Just hand me that pen." The speaker tore a leaf from a small book which he took from his breast, hastilly filled up a check, and threw it carelessly across the table, saying, "That will do, I suppose."

"Thanks, yes," replied Leonidas, just running his eye over the writing, "perfectly well, Mr. Du Solle."

A fourth time that name! And Hugh, absorbed in the unusual scene, or interested in his own or the Doctor's vicissitudes, had taken no heed; but, as the dealer tossed the slip of paper he had glanced at on the top of others lying in his box, Hugh's eye involuntarily followed it and read there: "Burgoyne and Co. Pay to Bearer One Thousand Dollars. Pierre Du Solle." At the same moment Leonidas handed over two large ivory circles, each representing five hundred dollars, and which the dark man immediately placed on the king.

"All ready, gentlemen? All down?"

"Hold yer hosses, Lonny!" exclaimed Judge Skewer; "I'm a goin' to copper that king!"

"Me, too," echoed Sloper, Gallus, and McCracken; but their aggregate stakes were much less than the dark man's single one.

"All down? Ace loses, deuce wins. King loses, queen wins."

Mr. Du Solle rose quietly and lit a cigar. "Will you take two thousand on the next case king? Either to win or lose?"

"Well, sir, you know two hundred, cold, is the rule," repeated Leonidas, smiling with even more than his usual urbanity; "but since you are a heavy loser, sir, we will transcend it for once."

Again a check was filled up and handed over; and again the ceremony of passing over in return the ivory symbols. This time, however, the recipient waited until three of his favorite kings had been dealt off before placing his stake; and this time he backed the king to lose.

"I'm goin' a hundred on that king!" proclaimed Skewer with alacrity, and "Me too!" again echoed Sloper, and Gallus and McCracken.

"All right, gentlemen," quoth the affable Leonidas, "and all down. Pomp, give me a cigar. Ten loses, nine wins; and a queer nine it's been to-night. Queen loses, ace wins. Keep *your* eyes open, Augustus. Six loses, king wins!"

Mr. Du Solle again rose, but this time he sauntered coolly towards the door.

"No more checks, sir?" asked the dealer.

"None, thank you. Ten thousand is enough for one night," and he disappeared.

"I say, Lonny," said the Judge, softly, "you kind o' cooked him."

"Nonsense," returned Lonny; "he won twice the sum here yesterday."

"Git aout! Did he, though?"

"Fact. But I didn't deal. You see there's a difference in men's luck when——"

He was interrupted by the outburst of an uproar above ten times more hideous than before; but the sounds were not confined to shoutings and strugglings like the last. For suddenly there came the sharp report of a pistol-shot; then another, another, and another, until the listeners had counted five.

"Sit still, gentlemen, sit still," cried the imperturbable Leonidas; "nothing but a bit of fun above, I dare say. Quick, Pomp, and let us know what's up. Watch the game, Augustus. Here's Antony! What is it, Antony?"

"Nuffin, Massa Lonny, least, nuffin much. You see, Massa, Judge Quagge and Gub'nor Bragge hab a little difficulty and draw'd. And Gineral Snagge comin' between to keep 'em peaceable, they both jest sot to, and went to firin' into the Gineral!"

"Good Heavens!" cried Gifford and the Doctor, rising aghast.

"Is he dead?" exclaimed the others, one or two making for the door.

"Guess he'm hurt a good deal, gemmen, 'cause he didn't fire back; but he ain't dead." And the negro rushed out with what he had been sent to fetch, nearly knocking down another just running in.

"Quick now, Pomp, what's the word? Is the General killed?"

"Oh no, Massa. On'y knocked him ear off wid one shot, and anoder shoot him troo de libber. Him all right in a week, I reckon."

"Nuthin' but a one-horse fight, arter all," said Sloper, vindictively.

"Do go on with the game, can't ye, Lonny?" asked Skewer, with impatience.

"D—n the game!" cried the Doctor, starting off to the relief

of the sufferer, closely followed by Gifford, who was not sor avail himself of the chance, since it had arisen, to escape the clutches of his extraordinary companions.

CHAPTER VI.

MARIAN had more reasons than one to fortify her resoluti leave California. It is probable that had she found, on arriving in the country, so congenial and refined a home as been hers in the quiet French family with whom she now res she would have esteemed it a rare good fortune, and would g have accepted its permanent protection. But several events since fallen out to modify her views, and which promised, inc altogether to change her intended future. The letter she last received from her father's friend in Europe contained ex sions which were as potent in determining her actions as emptory commands would have been from that father hin "It is necessary," he wrote, "for the sake of my dear fri memory as well as for that of his daughter, that she and I sh meet at an early day, that matters should be disclosed whic unsuitable to a correspondence, and that investigations shou made of a nature requiring both your concurrence and my ov render them complete and satisfactory. I should do less my duty did I not urge immediate attention to these poin sacredly due to yourself and to the character of your dead fat The letter concluded with a repeated desire that Marian sh meet the writer at New York within a given date, and enc a letter of credit, which under any circumstances would s her ample means.

There needed, then, no conscientious scruples respectin relations with Gifford to urge her departure; since she v equally have felt bound to depart had none such existed. there was, besides, a third reason for such a step, whic scarcely less weight than either of the others; and it scarcely be said that this was the presence of the man v Hugh had chanced to meet at the gaming house. Ther nothing singular in the circumstance that Du Solle should bent his steps to California. Many men of his stamp found way there in the early days, and find their way there pe still. He had, moreover, a load on his breast—a dark

on his conscience—which not unnaturally might urge him to travel, to hurry from place to place, that he might escape in fresh distractions the constant thought of that ineffaceable deed within. Marian had no idea that there was any sinister connection between her presence in San Francisco and this man's arrival there. But she knew of his coming—had seen him indeed in the streets—and she felt she could not breathe the same air with that inhaled by the slayer of her father.

When Gifford saw her therefore on the following day, the last day, as he thought, they might ever meet for converse such as then they had, alone and undisturbed, he scarcely required her renewed explanation as to the necessity for her going to New York, to understand her conviction that the necessity existed for her quitting San Francisco. He had felt instinctively, when reading his name on the check, that there was no doubt as to the man's identity; and the repugnance with which such a presence inspired himself, remembering as he did every detail of Marian's sad story, readily supplied a measure for estimating its effect upon her. He well knew that with such a nature as Marian's, every day, almost every hour, must be a separate pain when thus living in the same place, running the constant risk of encounter in its contracted limits with one whose relation to her in each of its wretched features had been that of Pierre Du Solle. And the more he thought of it, the more he himself seemed to dislike the idea of her remaining. Go back to the Bar she could or would not. She felt that, even before he had been irresistibly tempted to propose it; and that was the only alternative left since she could not remain where she was.

This was to be their last meeting, then. For although Hugh was to see Marian on board the steamship, yet the family, who were full of kindness, would also be there, and so, for that matter, would the Doctor; and thus this was practically their last meeting. It was a very, very sad one. Heaven knows there are ills and pains and trials enough—for its own wise purposes—in this strange world of ours; but I know of no trial more sharp, no pain more acute, no ill more hopeless than that of two beings who might make each other very, very happy, and who feel in their innermost souls that they could increase each for the other its highest capacity for good works, and who yet, for duty's sake, for conscience' sake, for justice' sake, must say that bitter good bye to each other for ever; must take up their weary crosses to struggle on in this gloomy pilgrimage by paths which shall never meet again.

The meeting was a very sad one, and we will not linger over

its details. But there was no talk of love in it. Th
was banned, tabooed, forbidden. There was no tal
but there was a strange, sorrowful undertone acc
everything that was said, and whispering of yearning
of hopes never to be fulfilled, of a life to come full of
and blackness, and despair. To be sure there wer
flashes of gaiety, like those threads of gold Spanish wor
in having shot here and there through their sombre d
the undertone of sorrow, the background of gloon
present, and the threads only made it look the blacke

Marian had her package ready; the package of litt
which Gifford was to take home to the Bar, and n
until he got there. And she had many fond and lo
sages to send to her kind friends the Armstrongs; n
one forgotten, indeed, of all the little circle. They w
member that, after all, she and they might be tog
more. For, might not Mr. Armstrong get rich eno
the old homestead at Saybrook? And was not th
very short distance by rail from New York? And
not then see as much of each other as ever? She, Ma
so. Nay, she even felt sure of it. But she did n
even if she felt, any such aspiration, any such cert
meeting Hugh again. It was wiser not to wish s
wiser even if wished not to say it.

I must affirm, without intending to enter into the
tion touching the relative moral or intellectual infe
sexes, that, so far as this man and this woman we
she was the better and the stronger. She knew,
now, that Hugh loved her; but nothing could ma
see that she knew it. If he knew that she love
he did not know—he would, I fear, have been n
nanimous nor so brave; he would not have resiste
courageously, he would not have respected the r
so religiously. He had many good qualities, ha
nobler ones than the world has given him credit
haps since; but I seek to describe him as he was,
as a perfect monster a creature not without faul
may be urged that my account of Marian is inco
a profession; but I do not fear that any man wl
the world will challenge my accuracy when I sa
impossible, is more possible with the opposite

For my part, I have no hesitancy in decla
ing all the hard and unsympathizing charact
roundings—considering his original nature

served and so proud; considering the oblique warp which injustice and harsh treatment had begotten, received among people who disliked him because they did not understand him, or because he was different from themselves, or because they disliked or did not understand his parents, or because he or they were poor—I say, regarding all these things, Hugh Gifford became in time a better man than might have been expected. Neither do I shrink from expressing my belief that much that was sweet, and straightforward, and true in Marian's character owed its development, if not its existence, to the happy, generous abundance and trusting fondness which hedged around *her* childhood. There are many things in every-day life which appear mysterious and complex, but which analysis resolves into very simple elements. If the two had been changed in childhood, Marian might have been a sort of Jane Eyre; and Hugh would have grown up a gay and reckless cavalier, perhaps; so perhaps it is just as well that they were not.

I called on Marian that afternoon to say my adieux—for we had always been and always will be the best of friends—and on my way to the door I met Hugh; and he looked like a very sullen, and morose, and miserable man; and Marian, although her eyes were a little red, looked like a saint; and this, it struck me, very fairly represented their two characters at the then stage of their experience—at the point which each had then attained in their pilgrimage through the world.

CHAPTER VII.

It was not the easiest thing imaginable to find a lodging at this time in San Francisco. Much of the population, as has already been observed, lived under canvas. Many slept on board the innumerable old ships in the harbor; some slept under the old boats on the shore. When the hours grew small, and even the insatiable gamblers and their streams of hallucinated customers became at last wearied and exhausted, there was a claimant for every betting-board, for every billiard-table, and for every counter. Buildings were going up, it is true, with great rapidity; but population was pouring in with a rapidity greater still; so that every tent, shed, shop, and warehouse had its contrivances for dormitories, its complement of sleepers. There

were hotels too; but they were, to speak mildly, of indiffe character, and moreover, they were incredibly dear; there Hugh Gifford and Dr. Landale did not patronize the Oriental o Tehama House; they took the advice of Mr. Sloper, who re mended an attic in a new three-storied warehouse on Sacram Street, and where, if furniture and attendance were of the s tiest, the price was moderate and the situation convenient.

Into this rather exceptionally lofty apartment the Doctor Hugh had conveyed their various purchases; consisting of dr dry goods, seeds, agricultural implements, powder and shot, other useful articles which they were to take with them on t return to Armstrong's Bar. Here also was Marian's packa and here the two came to sleep on the night before the day her departure. The Doctor had proposed returning to Sa mento *en route* for home that afternoon, but willingly deferre Gifford's wishes and the representation that the Armstro would be so much the better pleased to know that they had s their protegee safely on her voyage.

The companions were both weary of the perpetual and mo onous sights and sounds of dissipation and debauchery of wh two days sufficed to furnish a repletion, and had conversed l late hour on the evils and drawbacks of the infant civilizat which the gold discovery was forcing into so swift and abn mal a growth. They had discussed, and agreed, and arg about old societies and new societies, and the comparative vantages and disadvantages of republican or monarchical syst as applied to both, and the probable future of California, that of the whole country, and the general effect upon nati policy of that peculiar hatred of England which the immigr Irish and their descendants, and English and Scotch co-mate exile as well, were at such pains to keep alive and to dissemin and divers cognate subjects, until their eyelids could no lor wag.

These matters, although of an eminently suggestive, were no means of a lightsome or inspiriting character, and when H fell asleep it was no great wonder that his mind rambled regions more picturesque and fanciful. He dreamed that he become enormously rich, but that old Mr. Chester, thro some extraordinary concatenation, refused to let Virginia m him because he was so poor; and how he travelled across the to the Old World his waking dreams in boyhood used to d so much upon; and how many a gray old cathedral, many historic castle, crumbling, yet majestic, how many a Gothic ver of the centuries, and many a lovely, winding, copse-emb

ered road, had filled up his unsatisfied longings, had supplied the something to imagination, the color to the blank, ugly commonplace of existence which a life passed among steeples made of white boards, and mansions like shoe boxes, and treeless wastes which fear of Indians had denuded and idiotic tastelessness had left so, and intercrossing roads like chess boards, and a host of other antithetical disagreeables had left empty and sterile. Then, from these merely physical contrasts, his mind passed to spiritual ones. He dreamed that he had become a much better and nobler man than he ever yet had been. That, casting selfishness and indolence and morbid egotism behind him, he was pressing forward with earth's brightest and best, doing battle in the very van, for human rights, for human progress, for immutable truth, for celestial justice which was to bed one on earth. And out of that idea of something celestial was evolved a most lovely and roseate halo at the end of a glorious perspective, to be reached through stress of glorious deeds; and in that halo stood Marian, smiling and beckoning him to her arms, as the crown and reward of his labors.

But to reach her, much must still be accomplished. The path was beset with difficulties, there were many stalwart opponents to overcome, many a barrier to overthrow or to overleap. Yet what would not Hugh do and dare with such a prize as his ultimate reward? On he rushed, now smiting down an adversary, now rolling in the dust himself; sometimes discomfited but always recovering, straining on through all and in spite of all towards his goal. At last he saw it close at hand, but before he could quite attain the shrine, before he could clasp Marian's snowy hand and claim it as his own, he must encounter one adversary more terrible than all the others, a gigantic dark-faced Being, whose features were those of the murderer-gamester, Du Solle. This horrible figure wielded a huge battle-axe, with which he carved vast circles through the air within its radius. It would seem that nothing could come within that radius and live. Yet must the attempt be made. With desperate resolution did Hugh spring within the enchanted circle; but as he did so, uplifting sword and shield to guard his head, his foot slipped in a viscous puddle which seemed of human gore. As he fell, he saw Marian's smile of inviting tenderness change to a scowl of gloomy contempt. As he fell, he saw the huge battle-axe of the arch-enemy descending with lightning rapidity. It was rushing down with a hurtling roar. Another instant it would crush—did crush him —with an irresistible force, and he felt his own blood running into and blinding his eyes! By a despairing effort he dashed

aside the gore and stared before him; immediately opposite, with his head thrust through a shattered panel of the chamber door were the imperturbable features of Mr. Sloper, and on the pillow beside him was that gentleman's *sombrero*, which had been launched with such accuracy as to strike Hugh between the eyes and so recall him to consciousness.

"Air you two goin' to git fried or biled this mornin?" inquired Lafayette. "Or," he added, sarcastically, "hev ye an itch for gittin' griddled? There ain't much time for ch'ice, the hull town bein' afire, and the next buildin' in a light blaze!"

To rush to the window and dash it open, and thus to verify the truth of Mr. Sloper's assertion, was the work of an instant. It took scarcely another for Hugh to rouse the Doctor, to unlock the door, and to hurry on such of his garments as he had doffed for the night.

"I couldn't make ye hear by hollerin,'" observed Mr. Sloper, quietly taking a chew of tobacco, "nor yit bust the lock off by kickin'; so I did the next best thing and smashed in the panel with a harmer. Reckon ye'd have got roasted in ten minutes more!"

"Good Heavens!" cried the Doctor, dividing his time between a hasty toilette, the collection of his medicines, and rapid reconnoitring from the windows. "How is it? How did it happen?"

"Old Nick knows," returned Lafayette, "and he won't tell. Arter the big mucchants hev sold off all their truck and got the dust, some folks think they kind o' git up this sort of thing as a clearin' out sale; so's to send accaounts to consignors that their goods is stepped aout. But ye'd best scratch gravel if ye don't want your har frizzled!"

Here the speaker discovered that there were some boxes, well nailed and secured, stored at one end of the room, and with great skill and celerity he broke one of them open with his "harmer." An exclamation followed by the knocking off of the neck of a bottle at once revealed the nature of the contents —foreign spirits—wherewith Mr. Sloper instantly made intimate acquaintance. Not content with this, he straightway began to drop the boxes out of window, to which employment he appeared to be stimulated by the outcries and remonstrances from the now swarming crowd below. That the bottles would almost certainly break and the contents be wasted in the process gave Lafayette no apparant concern. He seemed to consider the occasion a sort of repetition of "a Time," and one on which his singular passion for uproar and grotesque confusion might safe-

ly be indulged. Having thrown out all the boxes, he now proceeded to hurl out the beds, followed by the chairs and tables of the room, until a general roar of execration from below and the exhaustion of material induced him to desist.

"By hokey!" he suddenly exclaimed at this stage of his proceedings, "I snum, I forgot to tell ye that thar's a kag full o' pound canisters o' gunpowder down close to the door, and like enough we'd better vacate, quicker!"

This startling intelligence was followed by a retreat more rapid than dignified, Hugh clinging fast to Marian's package as the Doctor did to his drugs. They had scarcely quitted the building before it was enveloped in flames; and although the "kag" of gunpowder—which was a receptable of the size of a pipe—had been rolled down the street and into the dock at its foot, the danger of staying much longer in the building would scarcely have been greater had it remained. For the fire spread with appalling swiftness. It sprang from the windows whence Sloper had cast the boxes almost as soon as they reached the street; and in five minutes more it was leaping and running and greedily licking at every scrap of wood-work, so that the mass looked like a fiery cage.

Nearly the whole town was indeed, as Sloper said, in flames. Almost entirely built as it was of the lightest and most inflammable materials, a long and unusually dry season had prepared it for destruction in a manner which the first few days of rain had done little to neutralize. Houses of pine boards, houses of canvas, houses said to be of iron, but which looked like shirred zinc, were swept away, licked up, rolled up, like so much pasteboard or parchment, as the devouring element flew ruthlessly on. As usual, a high wind lent fury to the flames, and as men rushed hither and thither in all the mad excitement and confusion which great danger and swift destruction so often engender, there were vague rumors passing from lip to lip of human beings further "up town," who had perished miserably, roasted in their beds. The fire was sweeping towards the bay; and as it came crushing and devastating on, there passed before it a fringe of carts, boxes and chattels of numberless descriptions, which the owners or others had rescued from destruction, and which still retreated before the victorious enemy as he marched nearer and nearer to the bay. Before him, all was a glittering, fleeing, smoke-swathed crush; behind, a mere barren, blackened char. Presently the streets themselves—they were all made of planks in those days—were caught by the flames, and further and further the fringe of people and their goods were forced towards the water. A lit-

tle more and the fringe would be overtaken and consumed. Al manner of efforts were made to stop the progress of the foe —tearing down, blowing up, drenching him with the waters of the sea—but in vain. March in triumph he would to the very edge and border of the bay. Then the people and their property were driven to a new expedient; they removed each and all—their goods and their persons—to the long wharves, produced from the principal streets, and stretching at right angles to the shore forth into the harbor; they carried all to these havens of safety, and then with axes they cut the wharves away and isolated themselves from the main land.

On one of these wharves stood the Doctor surrounded by claret boxes, cooking-stoves, wheelbarrows, crates of crockery, and almost every conceivable article of furniture, clothing, and general household gear. He had been deserted by his two companions, for Hugh had flown like the wind to assure himself of the safety of Marian, and Mr. Sloper was making himself more busy than he ever was before in his life in numberless mysterious operations connected with salvage, waifs and strays, and other disinterested supervision of other people's goods. In a few minutes more, the conflagration had extended so that scarcely anything of the shore could be seen. There were vast columns of rolling and eddying smoke; black, brown, and blue, mixed here and there with white vapor; at intervals a fierce, reddening glare told where the fire raged hottest; at intervals a dull explosion told where the engineers were blowing up buildings to stop the progress of the flames; yet there was little to see or hear, towards the land, save the repetition of these same sights and sounds. But in the bay there were now swift motion and excitement; for the ships began to be warped or tugged from their dangerous berths at the wharves, and two or three of them were already on fire. Then those adjacent commenced frantic efforts to escape from their dangerous neighbors, and the air rang with shouts and imprecations from the imperilled craft, each struggling to avoid the others.

Small time had the Doctor to admire either the picturesqueness or the horrors of the scene, for soon two or three poor fellows with mangled limbs, dragged from the fire where they had been striving to save life or property, and who in so doing had been crushed by falling beams, were brought in boats to the wharf; and, at once volunteering his aid, he was quickly too much engrossed for any cares beside the merciful ones of his calling.

Meanwhile Hugh had flown through the town, many times thwarted in the direction he strove to take by the flames, but su

ceeding at last in reaching the house of M. Bellot. Happily it was a considerable distance to windward of the spot where the conflagration had originated, and there was no anxiety on the part of the inmates as to their own safety. But Marian could not well conceal the joy with which she saw Gifford alive and well; for the calamity had befallen with even greater than common rapidity, and she had already heard that persons had perished in the flames, and well knew that Hugh's lodging was directly in the track over which the wind would carry them. There was, however, no time for sentiment, since M. Bellot had ascertained from the officials that the steamship would sail without regard to the fire; and that, indeed, as a change of wind might endanger her own berth and make it necessary to drop into the stream before the hour fixed for sailing, it would be well for passengers to go on board directly. Marian's luggage had already been despatched, and after much embracing of the weeping family, and innumerable kisses of the children, who were inconsolable because not allowed to see their governess to the ship, herself, M. Bellot, and Gifford entered the carriage which was waiting at the door and drove at once to the "Golden Age."

The great black steamer was heaving and throbbing convulsively; for steam was up, and the fierce blasts of white vapor were driving through her pipes with a hoarse, warning cry, which rose above the crumbling roar of the conflagration. Through two gangways running from the wharf, up and down her steep sides, a restless mass of human beings were crowding, jostling and struggling as if their lives depended on getting that very instant on or off the ship. There were crowds of successful miners, of ingenious agents, of promoted tailors, of artful adventurers who had married great washerwomen, of cabmen become millionaires, of scholars playing porter and carrying trunks and bags as they forced their way up the critical incline, of lucky gamblers, of magnificent nigger singers, of gorgeously peremptory ladies of the town, some going, some here to bid adieu to others who were going, but all crowding, jostling, struggling as if it were their last day to live, or as if they composed an American assemblage of the olden time on its way to dinner.

Through such a mass of seething humanity did Hugh and M. Bellot almost carry Marian up the gangway, feeling when they got to the top much as warriors must feel who have carried an enemy's rampart at the point of the bayonet. Once there, the task was somewhat easier, although by no means finished. They had next to find Marian's state-room, which she was to share with a lady, a relative of the captain's wife, who accompa-

nied him on the passage. While Hugh devoted himself to this search, the Frenchman, with his usual promptness and good-nature, ran to see that her effects were not lost in the confusion, but placed in the state-room, where she could have easy access to them. And thus, amid the clanging of bells, the rush of steam, the Babel of voices, and, covering all and pervading all, the smoke and horror of the great fire, Marian and Gifford were to say good-bye.

It was perhaps as well that such an adieu should be surrounded by so noisy, engrossing, and terrible a scene, for mutual fears for mutual safety had softened him and weakened her to a degree that might otherwise have been dangerous; dangerous to Hugh's honor, dangerous to Marian's self-respect. He saw her safely into the little room which was for some weeks to be her home; saw that it looked comfortable and seemed well situated, opening into what was termed the ladies' saloon. He saw, too, that Marian was very pale, and remembered long after how much she seemed affected by the excitement and confusion. He went to fetch her a glass of iced-water, and by the time he returned M. Bellot was busy directing his porter how to place Marian's boxes so as to take least room, and be in the most convenient spots. That done, a fiercer shriek than ever arose from the impatient demon who, weary of being confined, was to force the ship on her way; whereupon a sort of alarm-bell was rung, and then a cry ran through the vessel, up and down the decks, up and down the saloons, was screamed through all the passages and echoed into all the state-rooms, to the purport that all save passengers must now go on shore. M. Bellot had said farewell in his own kindly and fatherly way, and tried to press upon Marian more money than she had earned or would accept, and undertaken the transport of all manner of apocryphal kisses by way of final adieux to the children and their mamma, and he now briskly started for the gangway, inviting Hugh to follow. The latter had been hurriedly saying something to Marian about writing, but she would not promise now—perhaps she would write to him—after a time—but she would not promise. "Don't lose what I placed for you in the packet," she said to him at the last. And "Not while I live," he answered, and then there came another great, warning screech from the steam whistle.

"Farewell, Marian!"

"Farewell! a hundred times! And—and don't go *backward*, Hugh!"

"Not while I can see you in memory as I see you now," he said, thickly; and, as he spoke, he pressed on her finger and

r hand a ring and a brooch—of very plain workmanship, de of the first gold which Hugh himself had dug on Arm- s Bar.

ır Father will guide you, Hugh," whispered Marian, the ocking into her eyes. With an impulse he could not resist, l clasped her in his arms and kissed—not her lips or her but that lovely brow of hers.

is only once," he muttered, "only once—the first—the May our Father protect and guard you, now and for ever, ; Marian !" And he rushed from the room. He was the dash down the plank as the lines were manned to with- t, and so to sever the ship from the shore. In another ıt the sable monster was dropped into the stream.

Hugh sprang on the wharf he found himself in a group of Judge Skewer, Mr. Gallus, and Mr. McCracken were ers, they, together with Mr. Collector Scalpgitter, two edi- vo aldermen, and the keeper of a fashionable groggery, been drinking champagne with the captain in his cabin. ends would have detained him, but Gifford escaped them rudely, for he was resolved to make with all speed to the where he knew he should find the Doctor; from its ex- y he could get a last sight of the steamship—wave a last ll to Marian. He had greater difficulty than before, for e air was filled not only with smoke, but with cinders; and the ground he crossed had actually been traversed by the The sky above was all of an angry glow, and the sun, now required no eagle's eye to gaze upon it, looked a mere ball. The explosions still continued, for the fury of the s at its height. He found that even some of the wharves had been cut away had been ignited by falling brands; so required ceaseless care on the parts of those who had taken on them to save themselves and the goods on the wharves ommon destruction. Still these places of refuge were safer ny others, and accordingly some of them were packed ith people. Not so that on which was the Doctor; it had ne of the earliest endangered, and therefore one of the first from the flames, and, as access could only thereafter be it by boats, very few persons except the original refugees paired thither. Hugh managed to find a man who, for a of dollars, would take the trouble of a dozen strokes of r and land him on the wharf; and as he walked swiftly l the seaward end, on which were some low sheds or store- , he saw the same boatman take up the Judge and his com- s, who were evidently resolved to follow in his wake and elter in the same place.

He quickly gained the end of the structure, without pausing look into the buildings, or to notice more than that they, as we as the platform they stood on, were crammed and overflowin with boxes, bales, packages, merchandise of every description, an that almost every one he met was covered with soot and filt from head to foot. Amid the tumult and destruction of a scen the like of which he had never known or even pictured to him self before, he had but one thought—of Marian; and if h thought of the surrounding horror, even for a moment, it was i her connection, as that the angel of peace was sailing far away in whose absence the confusion must needs become worse con founded.

Hugh gained the end of the wharf, and there, with his back t the burning city, he once more, and for the last time, saw her She was in the gallery below the hurricane deck, and, there be ing comparatively few near the spot, her figure was not lost in surrounding throng. She stood there in her pale lemon dress with her net shawl, and her massive black hair, looking just a she did the day before yesterday, when Hugh first saw her afte he had come down from the mines. The coral lips were parte with an anxious look, as her eyes ranged over the desolation be yond; but as the vessel forged onwards, she presently descrie Hugh, and a sweet smile took its place. A sweet smile, but very sad one—such as comes over the faces of tender hearted women who are striving to make others happy when the are most unhappy themselves.

The great crimson wheels turn round faster, faster, and fast er; the puffs of thick white steam cease to spring from the pipes the red-ribbed, star-dotted ensigns fly up to the peak and th fore; a jet of smoke and a flash, as in mockery of the conflagra tion left behind, a hollow boom echoing slowly around the bay —and the steamship is flying towards, has entered, passed through the Golden Gate, the vision has vanished, and Hugh is left alone.

How long he sat there he did not know. It seemed to him as if the night must be near before he stirred, but the sulphur ous pall which covered alike the earth and the sky made it im possible to tell. He walked towards the storehouses at last, and presently he came upon Mr. Sloper, who looked like a larg chimney sweep, sitting in a sumptuous brocaded arm-chair, and digging sardines out of a box with his bowie-knife. By his side wa a broken case of brandy, and what he would have called a "kag" of biscuit or crackers. Judge Skewer and his friends were als here partaking of these dainties with the greatest avidity.

"Come and git sumthin' to eat," invited Sloper, with unusual cordiality. "I called ye 'bout fourteen times afore, but ye seemed to be sot on staring at Alcatraz Island."

"Smashed on a gal in a yaller dress," amended Judge Skewer; "that 'ere is the Gineral's complaint. I seed her on the boat, and if I'd a been the Gineral I'd a fit hard afore I'd let her slope."

"Any way," pursued Lafayette, "Island or gal, don't let it spile your appetite. These here air minners or shiners, and they're jist soddered up in their own ile. And, if ye like 'em better, we've laid in can chickens, lobsters and oysters to last a month o' Sundays."

"And if ye don't cotton to this 'ere rot," added the Judge, quaffing a generous horn of brandy, "there's claret, champagne, forty-rod rum, and old rye in Liberty Hall there!"

"Liberty Hall?" said Gifford, in the way of inquiry.

"Nuthin' shorter," replied Lafayette, proudly. "It's a hard day's work, but I done it. Come and *inspect*."

He led the way, and the party entered the largest of the sheds, over the door of which now appeared a rude sign inscribed with the legend:

L. Sloper & Co.,

Commission Merchants.

In this building were heaped barrels, cases of spirits, teas, sugars, and groceries of every description. There were also boxes of silks, bandas, and Chinese shawls, as could been seen by the labels. There were fine laces and codfish, jewelry and preserved meats, ladies' gloves and pickled salmon. Near the door stood a child's rocking-horse and a barber's chair. On one side were two huge oil paintings of Venuses or something worse, and opposite to these a cheval-glass. In one corner stood a gentleman richly dressed, with a remarkably urbane, albeit somewhat glassy expression, whom Hugh remembered to have seen doing duty in the window of a fashionable tailor of Montgomery Street the day before. There were saddles and bridles in profusion, and, in divers mysterious wheels and green and red cloths, could be recognized some of the tools of the gambling fraternity.

"It took me a heap o' labor," observed Mr. Sloper, surveying the field after the manner in which Napoleon might have contemplated that of Austerlitz, "specially the hullsale parcels. But I fetch't 'em at last."

"Ah!" exclaimed Hugh, a sudden light coming upon him and

showing how selfishly he had passed the day while some ha thus devoted themselves to saving the property of others; "Ah I see; and very handsome conduct of you, I'm sure, to run suc risks, and take such pains to rescue the poor people's property They ought to feel exceedingly grateful to you!"

"*Otro tiempo; no entiende*," suggested the Judge, with a puz zled air.

"Say that agin," freely translated Mr. Sloper; and Hugh re peated the substance of what he had said, whereat such a burs of volcanic laughter flew from the company that he thought h must have made some odd mistake, especially as the laughter ra into another peal, and then another, until the rickety building shook again.

"Look a thar!" finally commanded Mr. Sloper, sternly. "What is it, let me put it to ye, that ye see thar?"

Gifford looked as ordered at the end of one of the innumera ble boxes, and read the cabalistic legend again of "L. Sloper & Co." He looked at others; and every one bore the same in scription.

'Now," continued Lafayette, "what d'ye say to that?"

"Well, really, I don't know what to say."

"Very well, then, I'll tell ye. Them as had them goods ai now, many on 'em, makin' out their accaounts to send hum t the owners, the consignors; in them accaounts not only thes here goods air sot down as burnt up, but, likewise, all they'v sold and got the money fur in the last six months. Which bein' the case, in the interest of the absent owners, L. Sloper becomes an auctioneer and a commission merchant. Jest as quick as the fire gits put aout, the goods goes under the harmer, and Sloper and Company belts the proceeds!"

With this elucidation, the details of which it may be added were subsequently religiously carried out, Mr. Sloper excused himself for a few moments, and, in company with Judge Skewer, retired to an inner apartment. The Doctor now emerged from another of the buildings, gaining some respite at last in the care of the poor creatures he had been attending, other sur gieal aid having arrived from the City Hospital. Hugh will ingly acceded to his companion's proposal to depart from the unfortunate town as soon as possible; he had no longer any motive for wishing to stay. They learned, however, that their departure must necessarily be postponed until the following day, for the Sacramento boat had been so injured by the fire that she was taken off the line for a week at least, and passengers must wait for her sister craft, now on the upward trip.

While they were regretting this casualty, Mr. Sloper and the Judge once more presented themselves, but in far different guise from that in which they had disappeared. They had both been begrimed with smoke, and daubed and battered to the last degree by the vicissitudes of the day, but they now appeared as spruce and dainty as the tailor's block in the warehouse. Each was arrayed in a new suit of clothes of what seemed costly material, with hats and gloves to match, of the choicest quality. Mr. Sloper's red shirt, old trousers, and miner's boots, had, like the ancient checked suit and white hat of the Judge, been offered up to Neptune, and by this time were spinning gaily away with the tide in the wake of the vanished steamer. While Hugh was gazing in surprise at these metamorphoses, Lafayette led him apart, and turning his head on one side and riveting his eye with stern meaning, after his custom when about to be signally impressive, he put five eagles in his companion's hand, and said:

"Them air your'n."

"Mine?" echoed Gifford.

"Your'n. I don't never go back on no pal, I don't. I don't bet nuthin' on the Britisher, and he kin skin his own skunks, he kin. But them's your brads, them air."

"But how came they so?"

"When you quit the table arter Quagge and his gang got jawin', ye left ten chips behind ye. That's so. I jest messed 'em up with my pile, and when I knocked off—which was when the fire broke aout—I had jest five times as much as when you left the ranch."

"But I don't want it. I didn't win it. I'll take ten, because I left them, but for the rest, I'd rather——"

"If you don't belt them brads, pooty darned quick," interrupted Mr. Sloper, with a highly ferocious and determined air, "all I kin say is that you and me'll differ."

Thus admonished, Hugh prudently pocketed the gold, and Lafayette walked away quite satisfied. The night was now fast advancing, and after procuring some little refreshment, neither the Doctor nor Gifford were sorry to stretch themselves in a loft over the warehouse of L. Sloper and Co., and to try and recover in sleep from the toils and excitements of the day. Hugh was not so successful as his heart-whole senior, for although he fell asleep without difficulty, he awoke shortly after midnight, and all his subsequent attempts to lose his consciousness completely failed. He looked forth from a tiny window which opened on the town; the fire was still burning, although exhausted in

many places, and what had looked like mountains of blazing light were now mere chasms, pits, of inky desolation. The smoke and cinders were everywhere blackening the sky, shrouding the earth, and even hiding the sea. Faint crashes could still be heard in the distance, and now and again fresh showers of red sparks would leap high into the air, showing where a new explosion had occurred or another roof-tree had fallen.

Hugh saw lights also through chinks in the partition on the further side of the room, and he peered through to ascertain their cause. There he saw the Judge and Sloper, and Gallus and McCracken, and Belcher Gay and half-a-dozen others whom he did not know, enthusiastically engaged in a game of faro. They had their cloth, their silver box, their chips, their gold coin, and the Judge was dealing and the others were drinking and betting against his bank as merrily as Nero might have done had fate been known to old Rome.

Hugh sighed at the spectacle, and turned for relief toward the sea. He thought—and thought rightly—that perhaps another heart, another eye, might be turned toward his own in the gloom of night, in the contemplation of which he might forget the sordid Bacchanals close by. And Marian was indeed thinking of him at that moment, and praying with all her heart for his happiness and for his good; which finished, she had strained her eyes in striving to catch, far northwards, a parting glimpse of the land behind—but she saw only a lurid cloud.

CHAPTER VIII.

Hugh Gifford had resumed his old life at Armstrong's Bar—his old life in things external, but a new and critical one for things within. A struggle was going on in his soul the end of which no one, not himself, could tell. The love, the best love of which this man was capable, was a thing of slow growth. When he first saw Marian Rooke he had admired, indeed, but he had not loved her; nor would he have done so had his feelings been altogether free. For although by nature exceedingly susceptible to beautiful things, his early life had taught him an instinctive caution not only as to showing, but as to yielding even secretly to, such emotions. His mind oscillated between a sort of enthusiastic worship for every lovely thing he saw, and a suspicious

dread lest such an opening of his heart might tempt the entrance of something which should bring pain. Suspicion as to sincerity, suspicion as to fidelity, of course had their share in producing such a mental warp; but when suspicion was once disarmed, when doubt was once cleared away, the natural, unwarped disposition of the man had full sway. It may be thought strange that Hugh should have been most free from the caution and suspicion which were his blemishes, precisely at those times when he was meditating, consciously or unconsciously, treason to Virginia Chester. But a great passion which purges the bosom of many an unworthiness beside, has no compunction for the crime by which alone it itself can exist. Hugh was capable—as these doubters, scoffers, satirists, men looked upon with general distrust, fear, or aversion almost invariably are—of the most tenacious, unflinching and devoted adherence to any sentiment, any idea which once gained possession of his soul. The idea or the sentiment, slow to take root or find entrance, was in that proportion ineradicable or inexpugnable. Long ago he would have died at the stake sooner than recant his faith. He would have clung to the fortunes of the Stuarts long after their cause was unutterably hopeless, and have died a persistent, unvarying Jacobite. With a large amount of that sagacity which is swift to perceive when anything is inconsistent with common sense, he would yet have clung to a faith or a standard when hope of prevalence was utterly opposed to its plainest teachings. Thus it was that when any faint hope of winning Marian through any possible concurrence of events was put out of the question by her departure—when the chance which was slender at the best of times was reduced to the veriest of minimums by so final a separation—Gifford began to hug his illicit passion to his bosom, to cherish it day by day, to live in it, by it, through it, like as it were a religion, and to put his goddess on a higher pedestal than she had ever occupied before. He resumed his old life at Armstrong's Bar; but the Bar was not the same place, nor was he the same man as before the departure of Marian.

His visit to San Francisco had not tended to raise his self-esteem. He had seen a great many vulgar and dishonest men all openly and unreservedly proclaiming their devotion to one thing—gold getting. But in what, he asked himself, was he better than any of them? Was not he also striving to get gold? Had he not habitually set this desire or necessity above all others in his own estimation? What was the difference between himself and Sloper, or Judge Skewer, or any of the gamblers, unless it lay in the fact that they seemed to get the money they were striving

for and he did not? What advantage did he reap from his classics, his mathematics, his law, his knowledge of belles-lettres, which had cost such pains to acquire, and of which he had formerly been so proud? Alas, they could not help him to a single ounce of the yellow earth all were so desperately struggling for; indeed, he remembered that although his acquaintances in the Golden City had appeared willing, good-naturedly, to overlook his obvious educational impediments, it was clear that they considered them such, and were secretly of opinion that they were likely to be serious practical obstacles in the way of his success. Such humiliating reflections were not likely to be modified by the experience of the Bar. A man there was a man, and nothing more. The only one of the company who could be said to have been of more value than another for the general weal was Dr. Landale. He, indeed, by dint of the theodolite—once despised of Dick Railes, now reverenced to that degree that he would have put himself under its tripod as it were a car of Juggernaut—had discovered what had made the company richer for a time, and had received his due meed of honor and consideration. But with this exception, the democracy was complete. Each had his share and no more. Hugh, Luke, Dick Railes, even poor Ike, stood upon the same platform; and when Hugh had spoken of Luke's ambition, in significant allusion to his supposed admiration for Marian, he had forgotten that, so far as worldly circumstances went, he himself could claim no precedence. If Luke were unworthy, on such a score, of Marian's consideration, he, Hugh, was no less so. Having thought thus far, he fell back upon his old remedy—the only panacea after all for his particular griefs and woes—the only ally whose aid would enable him to mount into his fitting social position—the sole stepping-stone whereby he could ascend so as to be seen and respected of the world—Gold.

Gold! He would have it, he must have it. What had he come to California for? To crawl about with these wretched diggers, earning barely enough to keep soul and body together, like laborers on a railway? To live without society, without literature, without appreciation or mingling with those of kindred sympathies, of similar culture—for now that Marian was gone, this deficiency was felt in all its force—was this to be the end, the reward of his aspirations and his pilgrimage? No; it should not, must not be. He must have gold, ay, and plenty of it, as the indispensable prerequisite to any of his schemes, his plans of usefulness or honor for future life. But how to set about it! Were not all there equally anxious to grow rich with himself?

Or, if their desires were not quite so impatient and feverish as his own, would they not at least work as hard and as willingly as he to carry them out? What royal road could he devise to get more swiftly to the wished-for goal? What device could he employ, like Aladdin's lamp or Fortunatus' purse, to outstrip competition, to supersede that duller, yet as certain talisman, hard, patient, determined labor?

"I would grow rich," he moaned, "before youth has passed away; before the capacity for enjoyment has faded; before the time when love can no longer be inspired or friendship made; before travel will have ceased to amuse or novelty to excite; before the passions and sympathies are deadened or stiffened, and life has become a mere routine of monotonous repetition; before the time has gone by when I shall care to show the miserable, soulless grubs I was born and bred among, how I loathe their lives, their practices, their sordid examples; before the time when the spirit shall have flown to denounce and hold up to the world's contempt their Pharisaical lives, their knavish trickeries, their dastardly hatred of all that is superior to their own contemptible standards. But how to set about it!"

How, indeed! For the bright promise of the younger days of the cañon had been but imperfectly fulfilled as time wore on. Mr. Pangburn had been guided by a diabolical instinct when, rat-like, he had quitted the falling house, adding to the self-preserving, a provident, forethought which had cost his companions all their accumulations. The yield now was small, not so little as it had been just before the abandonment of the surface washings on the river, but not comparable to what it had been at their best of seasons. In a word, it was such as would have obliged the party to labor for a term of years before they could reasonably expect to save even modest competencies. To be sure, there was always the chance of another windfall like the discovery of the cañon; but, on the other hand, there was an equal chance, to say the least, of the diggings becoming exhausted altogether.

This was not a very bright look-out for Hugh's soaring calculations; and he became, as time wore on, his heart oppressed with unsatisfied longings, more and more moody, and more and more desponding. It was strange he never thought at this time that through poverty, and not through wealth, any chance of winning Marian was most likely to lie. That is to say, that while in the event of his becoming rich he could not in honor avoid his engagement to Virginia, if he remained poor, her father was all but certain to do his utmost to emancipate him from it. Instead of thinking of such a contingency, Hugh would often

muse on the ease with which he might follow Marian, go w
she might, even to the uttermost ends of the earth, if this
unbuilt castle in Spain of his, this unearned fortune, coul
fairy, or any other means, once be realized.

When Marian had made up the package of gifts for hi
bring to the Bar, she had not had that conversation with H
which had towards its conclusion, as it were by a lightning fl
revealed to her what she had not hitherto suspected as to his
ings. Perhaps if she had, she would have rearranged its
tents. Her gift to him was, to say the least, in view of the
cumstances, an indiscreet one. But the girl, with all her sel
spect, was apt, as we have seen, to be somewhat unconventic
The little box which contained this gift was carefully sealed,
addressed to "Hugh Gifford, Esq.;" and that gentleman ha
distributed, like another Santa Claus, the remaining content
his satchel, had kept his box without opening it for two days
the Doctor and he had returned to the Bar. He did not op
until the Sunday which next ensued, and which enabled hi
stray away alone to one of the haunts Marian and he had o
frequented; he went up to the placid lake among the hills, th
in that melancholy, yet grateful retirement, to examine and g
over his treasure.

It was Marian's picture. A very small miniature taken a
or two back, and although, as was natural, not looking quit
developed as the original, yet a striking likeness. It was
frame evidently very much older than itself, a frame of very
fashioned make, set around with alternating diamonds and pe
and having a cover like a locket, which fastened with a spr
The likeness was remarkable. There were the lips just pa
as Marian's often were, the nose slightly aquiline and so
cately chiselled, the low dreamy brow, the wealth of glossy r
hair, and—more than all—there were the large, melting,
speakably lustrous eyes,—eyes with their outline and meanin
distinct, so absolutely real, notwithstanding the heavy sl
which the longest of lashes necessarily cast over them. Uneq
ocally, it was Marian's picture.

So that Hugh was the only one at the Bar who still
Marian every day; but he was not the only one who thoug
her. She had left a void in the life of all, although it w
greater void with some than with others. Thus, the old pe
mourned over her loss quite as if it were that of a child, and
could not have cried more for that of a sister; but the o
whom the bereavement came hardest was poor Luke. He i
who sat wistfully in the long evenings looking at Marian's va

chair; he it was who carved a curious rustic bench and placed it on the brink of the little lake among the hills where she used to love to sit; he who built bowers at either end of the favorite walk by the river, and trained wild roses and jessamine to grow over them. It might have seemed too marked had these things been done when Marian was living and moving among them; but nobody noticed now in any such sense what were, in effect, only so many little monuments to her memory.

Gifford saw these things, and saw them without being jealous. It appeared to him right enough that since Marian was lost to them—as well as to him—and for ever, that sorrow should be exhibited in as unreserved a form as any who felt it might choose to show. One day—it was Sunday—he wandered up to the old place and found Luke sitting on the bench he had fashioned, and, as Luke quietly made room for him, he sat down by his side.

"It doesn't seem like the same spot now," he said, after a pause, and as if answering the thoughts of his companion.

"No more like it," answered Luke, seriously, "than the little duck-pond over behind grandfather's barn at Old Saybrook—that was where I was born, Mr. Gifford, and mem'ry's sharp 'bout things we see when we was little—not so dull, neither," he added, with a sigh, "'bout some things when we git older."

"Luke," said Hugh, after another pause, and with a swift impulse, "now she's gone—gone, and *we* are, none of us, I suppose, ever to see her again—it doesn't so much matter to speak plainly about it. You—you were very fond of Miss Rooke—of Marian, weren't you?"

"Yes," replied Luke, simply.

"All here were, to be sure," continued Hugh, accepting the reply in a general sense; "but you felt something more toward her than the rest, did you not?"

"I don't know what the rest felt," said Luke, "but I loved her with all my heart and with all my soul."

And no one who looked in his honest blue eyes could have doubted it.

"And would you," Hugh went on with a strange sort of curiosity, "that is, supposing no obstacles to have existed—would you have married her, Luke?"

"No," was the decided reply.

"No? You love her so deeply and would not, if you could, marry her?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Because," and the worthy fellow's voice trembled as h spoke, "because she did not love *me*."

"Still, people get to love others in time, when they do not: first, perhaps. Some natures require, as it were, to *grow* into love and dependency on others. By perseverance—constanc —you might perhaps have——"

"Ah, Mr. Gifford! why should I seek to fidget and worry nater like hers jest for a selfish purpose? What difference do it make, and what account am I, compared to her? I didn love for *my* sake, Mr. Gifford, but for *hers*."

"That is noble."

"Only just and right, I call it. I did tell Mary Anne I love her, and I pleaded rather hard—too hard, it seemed to me after wards. But it was a sharp trial at the time, and allers after forgot my own pain in bein' sorry for her."

"Sorry for her?"

"Because she had to suffer in the same way, and bein' higher and purer nater than mine, I knew she must suffe more."

"But how mean you in the same way?"

"I mean that Mary Anne, too, loved as I did; and as I did hopelessly."

"No!" half shouted Hugh, "she is heart-free, hear whole!"

"Free she may be, but heart-whole, no; no more than I b Mr. Gifford."

"You must be in error, Luke," said Hugh, more calmly "Miss Rooke had no affair of that sort—only had one in her lif and that irrevocably broken off. You must be in error."

A strange light came into Luke's eyes. Such a strange e pression—like what is sometimes seen in the face of one wh has been weeping, but over whose mind some humorous co ceit has floated unbidden, and sheds its reflection through th face.

"No," he said, firmly, "I'm not in error. I'm ignora enough, Lord knows, Mr. Gifford, and I might naterally mal mistakes 'bout a great many things, but not 'bout *that*. N Mary Anne Rooke loves, as I said, and loves hopelessly; a that's what made me feel so sorry for her, till, as I said, the pi kind of overpowered and smothered the love."

"But even if it were true—which I must still doubt—wou you then regret this hopeless love? Surely, with your feelin you would not wish her to marry another?"

"That's jest where you're wrong, Mr. Gifford. Heaven is my witness, how glad I'd be if it were an honorable love and made her happy. But it isn't, can't be, is quite out of the question; so of course I don't wish it."

"You speak in enigmas, Luke," said Hugh, a little impatiently; "I wish you could think it right to speak plainly."

Luke looked at the other long and earnestly. "It's strange," he murmured, half to himself, "very strange—and yet it's jest like *her*." Then aloud, "You've no idea, Mr. Gifford, what I mean?"

"None whatever—except that you must have deceived yourself in some odd way."

Luke shook his head again; and there remained in his face the only self-confident expression which perhaps had ever shown itself there.

"As you said, Mr. Gifford," he replied, slowly, "now that she's gone—gone, and we, none of us, are ever to see her again—p'raps it don't make so much difference, and then it's bein' so impossible and all; and you—you've no idea?"

"None whatever—not the least—I repeat."

"Then, Mary Anne was very much in love— and hopelessly, mind—with some one here on the Bar; had been before she or that some one came on the Bar; will be, long after she and that some one are gone from the Bar."

"And that some one?"

"And that some one is you, yourself, Mr. Gifford!"

"Good heavens!"

"I knew ye didn't think it, and I was glad, for both your sakes, ye didn't. But it was you, just the same, for all that."

The color gave a deeper bronze to Gifford's cheek, and his breath came and went swiftly as he muttered:

"You are wrong—wrong! Your own love has deceived, blinded you."

"No—never! Never, except for three minutes, once when I talked with her in the path there by the river. Never before, never since."

"And how do you know this?"

"And how do I know!" and Luke almost laughed aloud—"how do I know that the sun shines or the moon, or that the water tumbles over the caterack, or that *she* is beautiful, or that I am not good enough to love her? Because I KNOW it.—Because, if there were ten thousand people on the Bar, and each swore it wasn't so, I'd still know that it was."

"Surely, she——"

"Never spoke of or hinted such a thing? No. I spoke to her, thinkin', which I was hasty in perhaps, that others might see and talk of your bein' a good deal together; but, tho' she thanked me, she didn't admit I was right in my guess."

"You spoke to her?"

"Yes; it was kindly meant, if it *does* look selfish. It was because I knew that for you two ever to be anything to each other was impossible, and so——"

"Impossible! And why?"

"Why? Mr. Gifford, wasn't you, and ain't you engaged to another woman? And was it right for Mary Anne's honor any more than it was for your'n, that sech things should be said, or even thought? I didn't think so, and I spoke."

"Right—quite right. I forgot, Luke; you were quite right, I don't doubt. People often forget, or never think," he went on musingly, "what construction others may put upon their conduct."

"That was jest it."

"And as Miss Rooke and I had many subjects of common interest to both, we, perhaps, were not considerate enough about people making allowances. But, about this other surmise of yours, Luke—about Miss Rooke's feelings towards myself—you have misinterpreted this common interest and believed something deeper, and——"

"Let us not argue that, Mr. Gifford, please. That's a thing I know; so I can't weigh chances or doubts touchin' it. Mary Anne loves you—loves you as—as—I loved *her*."

The poor fellow stopped, and Hugh respected his silence. Indeed he had so much cause to wish for commune with himself as to be glad of the time for reflection. Here was a revelation, coming from this simple, single-minded source too, whose truth he thought himself a very mole not to have before suspected,—a revelation, which seemed to be at one moment the most blissful ever heard from mortal lips, at the next to be almost utterly indifferent. That he loved Marian as he never yet had loved woman, Hugh was now too well aware; but was his love made a whit more prosperous by a knowledge that it had been returned? If Marian were able to act as she had acted, to tear herself away from a presence which was so dear to her, simply from a conviction of duty, was she likely to be any less resolute merely because Hugh knew more of the state of her heart than was proper for her to divulge? Manifestly not. So far as his own feelings were concerned, Hugh found it difficult, in reviewing his conduct, to escape the persuasion that Marian must be aware

of them. If so, it was with a double knowledge that she had acted as she had. It was with a determination that the honor of both should receive no blemish, that she had taken and acted upon her resolution. She had done to Virginia Chester as she would have been done by, and if Hugh were by her side at this moment, armed with all the passionate eloquence that his new discovery would endow him withal, he believed her strong enough to persevere in the right path, and to resist him still.

There was no particular gain, then, in this revelation; it only increased the measure of Hugh's regret and despondency. He wandered over the dear old haunts again and again, and all he could arrive at was the thought ever recurring, sometimes in one shape, sometimes another, but, substantially, the same thought still, that if he were only rich, somehow all difficulties could be smoothed, and every one made happy without any one being wronged.

In his wanderings he was almost always attended by his old companions, Ichabod and Lion. Hugh liked their company chiefly, perhaps, because they seldom spoke, but there was a strong tie between them for a better reason. It is said that people—that is to say, people of mean, low natures—never forgive those who have done them favors. I am very sure that this is not the case with dogs; those, at least, of the nobler breeds may be better described as never forgetting rather than never forgiving their benefactors. Such, at any rate, was the case with Lion: he recognized Ike as his playfellow and his master, to the extent that they were never separated; but he regarded Hugh, so far as a dog could cherish such a sentiment, with a species of grateful reverence, of steadfast, unmovable attachment, which, by a natural sympathy, he also shared with Ike himself. The darkened mind of the imbecile, darkened in spite of its occasional flashes of keen perception or shrewd cunning, was yet capable of the most intense feeling of gratitude. The strongest desire that he had ever felt was that of doing Gifford some signal service in return for the inestimable one of saving his favorite's life, and his desire was hardly ever absent from his thoughts. Many a strange colloquy had he had with Lion on this important subject when no one else was by; many a time had he impressed upon his canine understanding the necessity which existed for some recompense being devised in requital for the great boon which had been conferred upon him. At such times the creature would listen with a grave and attentive air, and appear altogether to appreciate and concur in the arguments presented; and, whether he understood them or not, I am quite sure that he would have

shrunk from no sacrifice or personal risk which, upon oc their acceptance might entail.

While all the others on the Bar saw Hugh's depressio accounted for it in various ways, Ike did the same with hi lights, and after his own fashion. He knew that Marian an ford had been a great deal together, for he had often e been of the party; but he did not connect her departure wi existing gloom for two reasons: one was that, although he have seen something to laugh at and have a joke about i flirtations of Kitty Armstrong and Dick Railes, such a never for an instant occurred to him in connection with M and Hugh. He regarded the former indeed as a sup almost as an angelic being, and had an instinctive percept the impropriety of coupling her name with the jests and about love which seemed natural enough with those of cre of coarser clay. These are of the perceptions which, in ot low beings whom we call weak-minded, are often the stro and most clearly defined.

But Ike believed that he knew the real secret at the bott Hugh's disquietude; and he addressed himself one day to c a satisfactory acknowledgment of the accuracy of his opi They had been, as usual, hard at work in the cañon, and th had withdrawn, as was often their wont, to eat their frugal day meal under a waterproof tent hard by. The day had very wet, the rain pouring almost constantly in sullen, l showers, and scarcely a gleam of sunshine or a patch of blu which now and again would cheer their weary toil i long days of the rainy season, had on this morning been There were two or three tents for shelter when the torrents too heavy and unceasing for work; but the miners had long coming to the thigh, and oilskin coats, and generally spe they toiled steadily on, rain or shine.

"'Pears to me," said Ike, addressing Lion, who lay wi great curly black hide streaming with moisture outside the —"'pears to me everybody's gittin' down-hearted and lon 'cept you and me. P'raps," he continued, cutting off a pie dried beef and presenting to the animal, who took it with gentleness and deliberation, "p'raps it's bekase you and r the only ones who have everythink we want. We ain't d hearted, for we don't hanker for what we can't git. We lonesum, for we allers have enough company."

"Yes," said Hugh, half consciously acquiescing, "you are happy enough, no doubt. The happiest on the Bar are whom the rest are always pitying."

lon't want no pity," said Ike, scornfully; "pity 'em back,
e how they like it. Allers a grumblin' and cussin', come
ater or high. Heavy yield, no thanks; little yield, all
Ike's a poor shoat, that's so. He's a dirned fool,
ays. P'raps *that's* so. But he's the only one o' the crowd
on't rile over what he hain't got, and yet could git what
rest hanker arter."
ou mustn't mind Dick," said Hugh, gently; "he says
he don't mean, you know, Ike. He's a good fellow at
."
y, may be there's wuss than Dick; and then Kitty likes
o he wouldn't be drefful bad."
o; surely that's a mark in his favor. But you see, Ike, it's
l when people work hard that they should look for some
."
ey don't git more for grumblin' over it."
o, perhaps not. But it's some relief, you know, to com-

juns don't think so; and they know a heap better'n most
Better'n most anyone, 'ceptin' Lion. Injuns know a
' things they don't tell on, that's more," added Ike, reflec-

ou've seen many of 'em—I mean since we've been here?"
nly two or three. There's lots, they say, towards the
sun. And none of our folks dares to go to the
east for fear o' their precious scalps. They don't fight
not even like them 'ere devils o' Pawnees; but lie in the
ral and pick folks off when they go by. They're like
r one thing."
nd what's that, pray?"
ot carin' a darn for the gold."
h, they don't value it, eh?"
ot yet. Uncle Seth says they will, plaguey quick, when
now how much fire-water, and blankets, and powder and
t'll fetch. But they'll stop bein' Injuns soon when they
know that much."
or people, they don't last long after contact with the white

it they know what Ike knows—they know what all peo-
ow—where to find things they don't want. Ike don't
r gold; and he kin tell where's there's acres and moun-
f it. That's allers the way; nobody kin find it as wants
everyone kin hev it who don't."
boast had been repeated too often for Hugh to regard it

as any more than one of Ike's harmless and frequent fantasie and he well knew that if questioned as to why he did not use h exceptional knowledge, the old reply, that it would be "bad" f the others to share in its benefit, would be his only one; so Hug remained silent.

"Now you, Mr. Gifford," said Ike, turning sharply upon hi and narrowly scanning his face—"you can't find any gold more'n the poor scratching you git here now, I mean?"

"No, Ike, I suppose I can't."

"Then you kear for it, that's all."

"Well," confessed Hugh, with a sigh, "I fear I do, Ike."

"Do ye now, really, very much?" put Ike, with curiosity.

"Yes—really—very much."

"Ever so much?" persisted Ike, coming close, and peerin into the other's face, as if trying to elicit some mysterious occult secret.

"Yes, ever so much."

"I wish ye'd tell me why."

"Why? Why?" repeated Hugh, forgetting, in the thought which the inquiry suggested, the mental deficiency of the ques tioner. "How can you ask why? Because it would make me a different man! Because it would change into refined and ele vated surroundings the coarse and sordid ones which must now, perforce, content me! Because it would enable me to achiev something, and show the world of what stuff I am made! Be cause it would enable me to avenge myself on the narrow minded wretches who have scorned and trampled on me becaus I was poor! Because it would enable me to apply the touchstone that I might thus distinguish between false love and true! An because, if the test showed what I think it would, it woul enable me—oh, happiness! to—to——"

"To what?" urged Ike, eagerly.

"To do and be all that I most wish for on earth," said Hug recollecting himself in time to employ a generality instead o the particular declaration which had hovered on his lips.

"It's curus," mused Ike, "that what some folks want so muc other folks don't kear shucks for."

"Yes," answered Hugh, abstractedly, and thinking how h had been led unawares into a mere wild and purposeless dec ration of his wishes.

"P'raps, arter all, we may strike a lead agin, as rich as t first go off wos on the cañon."

"*Perhaps.*"

"There's nuthin' for't but to keep on tryin'."

"Nothing."

"Then agin," remarked Ike, digressing into a new train of reflection, "you know a heap more'n most any on 'em 'on the Bar. I don't know nuthin' and don't make nuthin', being short o' school learnin', let alone other things; but folks that know so much ought to git on faster'n them that don't know anythink."

Hugh colored. "Why, you see, Ike," he replied, again explaining, "I *have* had some education, it's true, but I've never had anything of a start in life to make that education of any avail. I was bred to a profession, but a man should be able to live four or five years without its aid, who is to depend on its practice for the future. I had no such help. My parents could give me education, but they could give me nothing more. So that in some sense I was rather the worse than the better for it, seeing it pointed out pleasures, opened the way to habits, generated hopes, which I had no means of carrying out or fulfilling."

"Then," said Ike, calmly, "you're wuss off with the eddication than ye would have bin without it. So I allers thought."

"Perhaps not altogether so. But it doesn't make a man happier who is absolutely hopeless of rising in life."

"You want to rise in life," repeated Ike, in an argumentative sort of tone, "but yit you can't earn no more with your hands than Dick Railes!"

"No," said Hugh, sadly, "perhaps not so much."

"And you can't rise in life without gold?"

"No," said Hugh, decisively; "certainly not."

The sun here flickered forth a little through the drenching showers, and the colloquists joined their fellow laborers at their tedious labor in the now niggardly cañon. Hugh thought he had been holding what appeared to be a curiously-connected conversation, seeing that poor Ike had been his companion; but, beyond a passing wonder, the matter soon slipped from his memory. It was far otherwise with Ike himself. He had in his own way obtained the particular knowledge he had set himself to find out; and the discovery, so far as its main essential was concerned, had sunk deeply into his heart.

CHAPTER IX.

"THERE ain't much show," said Uncle Seth, as he sat smoki his pipe in the chimney-corner, one raw January evening, "i the old homestead at Saybrook this year. We kin lay by son think in bank, and hev a wood instead of a cotting roof, m be; but gold is too scass for to think of gittin' rich by railro this 'ere season."

"All along o' that 'ere pesky Pangburn," snapped Mrs. Ar strong, her eyes quivering over her spectacles, "which was t palaveringest mortal I ever see. I ask ye now, who could t he didn't care anything about chiny, or never took an interest patchwork, by what he said—no, not from fust to last?"

"He is a fust-rate business man," chuckled Dick Railes, w had always felt a lurking dread that Pangburn's merits as a co noisseur in these articles of vertu might seduce the good dar into an attempt to supersede his own pretensions with pret Kitty—"a fust-rate business man is Pangburn; and knoi dreffful well which way to make folks look when he's arter t sugar."

"Anyhow," growled the Doctor, "he just kept us from maki improvements which might have made us all rich by this tim However, it's worth some sacrifice to have had one really go chance to study that sort of animal."

"I reckon studyin' of 'em don't make 'em hook less," o served Mrs. Armstrong, sagely; "and, opinion bein' asked, I elect their bein' studied where folks had stronger bolts, or mo to lose."

"After all, ma," chirruped Kitty, "we're much better c than some poor people; and surely it might have been mu worse."

"Allowin'," affirmed her mother, "f'r instance, that we'd s tled among the Mandans, where the red varmints has that ta for chiny and patchwork that they wear all they kin git on th miserable painted bodies. It might a ben wuss to be skinned a Mandan instead of a Pangburn; but for ch'ice, give nuther."

"Up, away no'th east'ards," said Uncle Seth, puffing aw patiently, "there's bin awful work among the red-skins. Wh

here warn't many whites, they was peaceable enough; but now the miners air increasin' and multiplyin', and kind o' pushin' into their huntin'-grounds, they're gittin' awful savage There was seven miners killed on the Coltsfoot range away to the no'th o' Gunpowder Crik a week ago Sunday."

"That's whar Pangburn ought to a gone," said Mr. Railes. "If you could on'y a made a pint thereaway, Doctor, with the th'odolite, and persuaded the critter thar was rich diggins thar, he'd a come to a righteous end by this."

"I wouldn't wish no white man sech a fate, Dick," said Uncle Seth, charitably; "we've ben too near it ourselves to wish e'er a feller bein' to share in't. As for the dust, he won't be no better nor we no wuss for it, in the long run."

"When I kin dig taters out of a hill," remarked Mrs. Armstrong, "furthest be it from me to grudge fryin' 'em with the pork. But the hard lines was rather tucked on to us jest about then. You kin dig gold, and you can dig taters, but you can't dig up gals like our Mary Anne not every day." This was said with a sorrowing glance towards Luke; for the mother's instinct taking alarm at his long-continued, patient sorrow, had not been deceived at last in divining the cause.

"Ay," said Seth gravely; "both our treasures were took from us to onct; and it did seem rather stiff comin' together like. I take it, if we'd had a ch'ice, few on us would a differed as to which to lose. But these things is ordered for us, and we don't order 'em for ourselves."

"I wish an order'd come for an ounce to the pan," said Dick Railes, *sotto voce*, "like as was in the old times. Seems to me if things keeps on, we'll hev to go to hoein' corn agin for a livin', with a little huntin' and fishin' thrown in."

"There's gold enough in the country," continued Seth, "only s'raps we ain't so fortunate as some folks who change their location oftener. For my part I allers allowed I'd rather stick to one pot, bein' naterally sot agen movin', and some struck in years. We've staid here very stiddy, that's a fact; and when we fust come, we could pick and choose. Its harder doin' that now; for to the suth'ard and west'ard there's the settlers comin' in thicker and thicker every day; and to the north'ard and east'ard here's the redskins who air on the war-path, and no mistake. So now I don't see nuthin' better than to squat where we air, and worry of it out."

"There's as much gold here as anywhere," said the Doctor, lighting his pipe with a red-wood shaving; "but it's harder to get at, and will take machinery such as we haven't got. Quick-

silver will separate gold from earth, but it won't extract it fr quartz. That must be pulverized before it will relax its ho We've been skimming the surface, that's all; and we shall ke on skimming till we either find a new placer, or get a qua mill."

"Couldn't we make one?" asked Dick.

"Make one!"

"Make one as we did the flume," explained the backwood man, who had a secret conviction that strong arms and bro axes were equal to the manufacture of almost any, however co plicated, machinery.

"Do you know what such a thing is? How would you s about it?"

"Why," said Dick, somewhat abashed, "couldn't ye kind work in the th'odolite?"

This was the resource for any mysterious or recondite nee when the strong arms and broad axes required auxiliary aid. was remarkable that, just as Dick had at first regarded the ins ment as a mere bauble, a child's plaything, he now firmly b lieved it capable of conquering the most unheard-of difficult It now inspired him with awe, just as before it filled him w contempt. It had been a useless toy, and was now the thund bolt of Jove.

"Why, no," laughed the Doctor, "I fear it would scare serve us there. 'Twill measure heights and distances, and sur land, and lay off angles, and tell us even differences of levels, b it won't answer the purpose of a machine-shop, nor build us steam-engine."

"I've bin thinkin'," said Seth, "that we might kind o' pro pect more. None o' these questions of title are likely to be ri leastways for some years to come, and we might give a little tim when the rains hold up to prospectin' a piece, jest as well as spe it all in poor work. Anyway, it'll only cost the time to try."

There had been a great deal of desultory prospecting befo and it had generally proved very unproductive, But Uncle Se had an idea that, by proposing such experiments now and the he forestalled discontent, and kept the party in harmony togeth It had been arranged between Dick and Kitty, and, after so demur and talking of it over, with the old folks, that they we to be married in the coming spring, provided a certain s should then have been accumulated as going to Dick's share, th making it reasonably prudent for him to assume new responsib ties. According to Dick's version, they were to be married at e summer, "whether or no"; but although inwardly resolved

being debarred from happiness by pecuniary considerations, k was still extremely anxious to get on, and he chafed under slow progress and niggardly yield which so long attended r efforts at the Bar. But the rainy season had kept more ı one impatient spirit in check there. Luke Armstrong pined a more active and adventurous life, and we have seen some- ıg of Gifford's discontents and aspirations. As for the ;tor, in addition to his share of the mining interests, and at- ling to such few trifling ailments as any of the company had erienced, he was absorbed in making geological and botanical ections to that degree that he had no time either to be un- py or discontented.

'here were a great many vicissitudes of fortune that season. ies were blown to the ear on every breeze of enormous for- s swiftly amassed, of incredible lumps of gold discovered, of ntains all compact with the glittering metal, of ravines more ious than the fabled valley of diamonds. The truth was, when any brilliant discovery was made, it was profusely ad- ised and trumpeted, so that scarcely any one in California re- ıed ignorant of it; but of the thousands who made but a bare istence, struggling on against the evils of enormous prices for y necessary, often almost without shelter, clothing, or even , report made no mention. So that the young men at Arm- ng's Bar very naturally contrasted their own measure not ı the latter, but with the former, standards of success; a pro- ling common to all men in all generations, and it may be)osed, always to remain so. But in spite of this, there were eat number of real, substantial fortunes amassed, and no lack ıuthentic details to cause the unlucky ones to envy and ad-).

s for Hugh, not a week passed but he was revolving some me for changing his situation. But there were not a few acles to such a step. First, there was Marian's desire that hould remain with the Armstrongs; it was very sweet and eful to Hugh to think he was obeying that desire. Then ould not bear, somehow, melancholy as were their associa- s, to tear himself from the places she used to love, the spots ch she had hallowed by her presence. Added to this was circumstance, that it was a matter of no little inconvenience hat date to wander forth in the rainy season with no fixed le or habitation. I remember sleeping on top of a pile of ks once, exposed through the livelong night to a drenching , at a place called the "Summit," on the Isthmus of Panama. "Summit," besides its negative charms of affording no

shelter—the few wretched *adobe* huts it contained having b absolutely packed with travellers before my arrival—struck as the most hideously desolate hole I had ever yet seen. N I dare say to those who, being, if not comfortably, at least dr housed, looked forth and saw me on my eyrie, the place peared a very good one to stop in, notwithstanding they w sleeping so close to one another on the floor that there was room for any living thing, except the fleas, to come betw them; and Hugh had seen, even in his short travels, so m poor fellows without a roof over their heads, that even "cotting" one of his present quarters was not to be despis At all events, the season which we call spring had almost co and he still lingered at the Bar.

When the rains began to cease, a marked change came o the poor witling, Ike. It has been said before, that his me weakness had not the effect to impair his usefulness in a gen way, or to disqualify him for steadfast labor. On the contr he was always at work with the earliest, and among the las pause. But latterly he seemed to take a different view of obligations. By degrees he began to avoid exertion, to go l to the cañon, to abandon the particular spot where he was p ed, and go restlessly to others. After a time he stayed a from work altogether, hanging about the house, however, chopping wood and bringing water, as had been his wont l ago at the farm on the banks of the Ohio. When this had g on for a while, alternating with returns to his more regular h its, Seth took occasion, with great gentleness, to remonstr with him, whereat Ike plumply refused for some days to do labor at all. Being unmolested and unnoticed for a space, again resumed his toil with the others. But the interrupti continued, and even became more frequent. Soon after, he a ed a new vagary to his former ones, which at first caused so alarm; he absented himself for a whole day, and did not ret until far into the night, being let in with his four-legged c panion, at twelve o'clock, greatly to the relief of Mrs. A strong, who had desired the whole party to turn out and s the country for him. An impression now arose in the little cle that poor Ike was fast losing what slender wits he ever h and that he was in danger of becoming quite useless and inc ble. On this, Seth consulted the Doctor; but the latter adv that Ike should be left entirely to his own devices. In that the increased aberration might be but temporary; but if much notice were taken, or any coercion attempted, it might

ıly make him worse, but destroy all chance of his ultimate re-ɔvery.

One day he seemed to have capped the climax of his eccentri-ities, for he departed before daybreak, taking with him not only is inseparable companion, but also Dick Railes' mustang mare, he apple of his eye, from her shed in the *corral*. At first Dick ormed and swore, for this was his one possession which he ould not bear to have in any manner interfered with; but he orgot his anger before the next morning, when neither man, orse, nor dog had been seen or heard of. Such a thing had ever occurred before, and it threw the Bar into a great commo-ion. They hunted in all directions, as far as Yankee Jim's on he side, and the Coyote Run on the other; they even pene-rated a dozen miles toward the dreaded Indian country—a di-ection they had ever been most sedulous in avoiding. A sec-nd night wore away in anxious expectancy, but still the truant ame not. Towards morning Seth had determined to raise the ountry in every quarter, and, if possible, to have poor Ike ound; for there now began to be a general fear that he had met aster, and that his body, mangled by Indians or grizzlies, was l they could hope to find, if, indeed, it were not already dis-osed of by the latter.

But on the second morning, as the sun was just peeping over e hills, poor Ike returned, having been absent eight-and-forty ours; and to Dick's great satisfaction he was accompanied not ly by Lion, but by the mare. The trio were in a woeful ight, indeed. They were draggled with dirt, and wet from ead to foot. Ike was rather a singular figure at the best of mes, but now he was a sight to behold. If he had been plas-ered with glue, and then rolled in a dust heap, he could scarcely ave been more matted with adhering filth; and Lion had evi-ently experienced precisely the same vicissitudes with his aster. As to the mare, she was not only exceedingly dirty, nd quite knocked-up, but very footsore, notwithstanding Ike nd led her for many miles during the latter part of his erratic ourney, himself scarcely able to drag one foot after another. s usual Ike declined to give any account of his wanderiugs, nd his friends wisely avoided pestering him with questions. He e and drank heartily, and then fell into a sound sleep which sted into the evening. Then he awoke, and soon after had a iolent chill, followed by sharp febrile symptoms. At this the octor gave him quinine, and found it necessary to continue his eatment for some days. In the mean time the mare was put

out of his reach, and Lion, who seemed heartily glad to be home again, lay snoring under his cot.

Ike had started for his excursion on a Tuesday; he return on the following Thursday, but it was not until Sunday that seemed to have entirely recovered from its effects.

It was one of those supremely lovely mornings that are bright, so gladdening to the heart, because they come after long, long series of days when the sun is scarcely ever seen, when the rain falls almost ceaselessly, as if the skies were never again to clear. A fine haze was in the air, which made the landscapes look like mezzotint, and the sky was of that tender California blue, than which that of Italy may be more beautiful but which none who have seen the former will allow. The long continued moisture had swelled vegetation into its most luxuriant growth, and a sparkle seemed to dance on every spray and tree-top as if diamonds had been sprinkled there. It was a day to be remembered for its own loveliness, but it was tenfold more precious to Gifford, in that it reminded him so strongly of so many others like it when his walk up to the mountain farm had not been so lonely as it this morning was. He sat there on Luke's memorial bench, and bathed in the soft, delicious air, his thoughts wandering back many a day into the past, far into the time which now appeared so distant, when the company had started from St. Louis; to the time before they had faced the dangers of the plains, and had turned into a veritable citadel the huge old vehicle they christened Castle Armstrong. And Hugh could not but remember how nervously anxious he had been for the days to pass that he might be at his destined work of winning a fortune. Alas! how many of us like him can recall such memories, and long to change the present days for those—unreturning ones!

His reverie was broken by a light step, and Ichabod stood before him. He wore something of his old look again; his dress, if fantastic, was, at least, clean, and as usual the stalwart Lion was at his heels.

"Why, Ike," cried Gifford, "you look quite yourself again as hearty and well as if you had never taken that wild-goose chase of yours among the hills."

"What's a wild-goose chase?" asked Ike, suspiciously.

"What? Why, a chase after a will-o'-the-wisp—a race without a goal—a running after nothing, to be sure."

"And you think Ike has been running after nothing?"

"Not purposely," said Hugh, gently. "Ike had an object in view, but was mistaken, perhaps, in the path he took to get at

"That's the way with all the wise folks," returned Ike, sulkily, "everybody's mistaken but themselves. The beasts know how to suckle their young, and the birds to make their nests, and even the sparrers know how to find the berries; but they're all fools like Ike! Bime by, when the wise folks kin find what Ike kin, they'll be fools, I reckon, and Ike'll be a wise man."

"Come, come," said Hugh, in his soothing way, which he seemed to keep for the simpleton, and use with no one else, "none of us are wise always, Ike; and if you accomplished the object of your journey, so much the better."

Ike sat down on the bench by Gifford's side, and began with great industry to rearrange the feathers in his hat, while his companion relapsed into reverie. Presently, however, he was roused again by a touch on the shoulder, and, looking at Ike, he saw that the latter was pointing mysteriously to the north-east.

"There's Injuns there away," he affirmed sententiously.

Hugh nodded. "We always knew that—or supposed it."

"There's Injuns there away," repeated the other, "but *they won't hurt Ike.*"

"No?"

"No;" and Ike resumed his work with the cherished feathers. After an interval he again broke silence:

"They've gone and hid Dick's mare!"

"Yes. She was tired and footsore, and they have given her a holiday."

"They've hid Dick's mare," reiterated the simpleton; "but there's hosses at Yankee Jim's that don't want no holiday."

"Yes?"

"Yes," and once more the process of redecoration went on.

"I'm a fool," suddenly exclaimed Ike, interrupting his toils with a great outburst of candor; "but not about everythink. Some folks ain't fools; but then again they ain't cute about anythink."

"Ay," conceded Hugh, with a lazy assent to the proposition, "there are many who think themselves wise who don't know more than Ike."

"There's many who think themselves wise who know a darned sight *less* than Ike," corrected he decisively. "Now," he continued, after a few moments of deep reflection, "you're one on 'em."

"I?" said Hugh, smiling.

"I want you to promise me something," said Ike, mistily changing the thread of his discourse, "afore I go any further."

"What is it, Ike?"

"A promise to be kept as sacred as one to your sweetheart."

Gifford turned crimson at the allusion; but Ike was too absorbed in his own effort at concentration and continuity to notice him.

"You'll make a sacred promise, with Lion as a witness," he repeated.

"If you wish it," answered Hugh, "and it's nothing wrong, I will."

"Wrong, wrong!" echoed Ike, impatiently; "it's nobody's business but mine and your'n. I don't want ye to kill no one, nor set the old ranch a-fire, nor yit hook the gold dust like old Pangburn. I ain't travellin' on anythink but what's right, I guess."

"Well, well, Ike, I promise."

"Seein' it's for your own good—as Lion knows as well as me—ye might as well. It's only to promise what I tell ye no one else shall ever know, 'cept I myself agree to their knowin' of it."

"That's reasonable enough. I promise, faithfully."

"That's you. I like to hear ye say 'faithfully,' for talkin' honest, Mr. Gifford, I don't feel quite sure how long my head 'll last, and it sounds as though you'd carry out my idea if I give out."

Hugh looked at him with surprise. His words were perfectly coherent now; coherent as they had been on one other occasion when he had made a great effort to explain and to understand. Hugh had not sufficiently studied the pathology of such cases to be aware how it often happens that the afflicted can compass something very like sanity by a sovereign effort of the will; and although reaction be certain to follow such an instance, that, during the effort, the reasoning faculty is almost in a normal or healthy condition.

"I'll do whatever you wish, Ike," said Gifford, "at least so far as I can, believe me."

"Well, then," continued the simpleton, gravely, "I wish ye to git up to-night arter the rest is asleep, and walk with me as far as to Yankee Jim's; there we'll git hosses, and at daybreak we kin push on our way in the saddle."

Gifford hesitated. There was something so like folly in this apparently aimless expedition that it seemed ridiculous to embark in it. On the other hand, he had promised acquiescence, and Ike's manner was so different from usual that he felt it would be extremely awkward to employ one of the commonplace evasions generally adopted with such people. He was greatly puzzled.

"You're a thinkin'," observed Ike, steadily, "that this ere fool's tryin' to git you on a chase arter the wild goose he's be'n travellin' arter hisself. Don't think that, Mr. Gifford. Don't think it this time. I hold ye to your word, mind; and I agree and stipperlate ye won't be sorry ye kept it."

"Be it so," exclaimed Hugh, after a little more reflection. "It shall be exactly as you wish, Ike; I'm sure you wouldn't give me unnecessary anxiety or trouble. I will do as you desire. And now will you tell me, after that, Ike, what is the aim—the object of this queer journey of yours?"

Ike shook his head. "I'd rather ye trusted me clear through. Praps," he added, ingenuously, "if I told ye the object ye wouldn't go, arter all."

"That's not very encouraging," returned Gifford, laughing. 'However, my word is passed, and I won't go behind it. At welve o'clock, then, Ike?"

"At twelve," said Ike, "or as nigh it as the rest may happen o be all sound. It wouldn't do for 'em to know I was stirrin' gain, for they'd try and stop me, may be, 'specially the Doctor."

With this curious illustration of the gleams of sagacity that ometimes shot furtively athwart the dark texture of his mind, ke whistled to Lion, and stalked away into the depths of the orest.

Much as he doubted his own wisdom in giving the promise, Hugh never dreamed, now that it was given, of revoking or qualifying it; but he passed the day with some uneasiness as he reflected upon the many possible dangers and troubles his compliance night bring, not upon himself alone, but upon his irresponsible ompanion. Should anything befall, who would hold him justiiable in assenting to the plans of one so notoriously imbecile, if ot absolutely idiotic? Such was the thought that gave him nost concern. On the other hand, he found a feeling within his reast which had almost the force of conviction, and which conınually urged a belief that, as Ike had declared, he would not be orry for keeping his word.

The day wore on, as many another quiet Sunday had worn on efore; but Hugh's pleasure in its beauty, its softness, its clusterıg associations, was marred, or merged into a longing curiosity hat the night might come and bring at least a beginning to the olution of Ike's mystery. It came at last with a deep, solemn arlight; but, as chance would have it, the family were wakeful at night, and it was quite twelve o'clock before, as Hugh idged, all could safely be deemed unconscious.

He was just thinking of rising, as he lay on his narrow pallet,

when a hand passed lightly over his face, and he knew that Ik was beside him. He rose noiselessly, and quickly finishing th scanty operations of his toilette, Gifford thrust his revolver an hunting-knife into his belt, and strapping on his knapsack, i which he had provided a few biscuits and a flask of whiskey, th two stole forth into the darkness. Lion was already outside the door, waiting, apparently in accordance with a previous understanding, until he should be joined by the others.

There was no moon, but the stars were bright, and the air perfectly still, and the trio set forth on their march amid that unearthly silence seldom observed, save in a new country, where the sounds of humanity and its adjuncts are few and very far between. Now and again this silence was interrupted by the distant cry of a coyote, which made Lion sniff the air with a contemptuous sort of curiosity, for he had more than once grappled with and overcome these wolves of the prairie; but, for the most part, the silence was unbroken.

All night long they tramped on, keeping near the river for a guide, with an occasional look upwards at the stars to make sure of being in the right direction. The distance to Yankee Jim's was upwards of twenty miles, a march which might have exhausted many who had not, like Hugh and Ike, lived so much in the open air, and who had not, as they had, since starting to cross the plains, spent so much time on their legs. As it was, they were not sorry, at the same moment that they saw the first red streak of day, to see the low roofs of two or three straggling huts which constituted the settlement.

Here, as they were well known, after some little bargaining, Hugh managed to hire a couple of respectable, rough Californian ponies, much more surefooted and trustworthy for a long pull than if they had been two hands higher, or two hundred weight heavier than they were. Having made arrangements to keep the animals for three days, Gifford and his companion turned back, as if to retrace their steps to the Bar; but before a mile had been traversed in that direction, they wheeled sharply to the left and made straight toward the north-east.

All that day, and far into the following night, with only an occasional pause for frugal refreshment, the two horsemen wound and forced, and struggled their way over hills, down valleys across brooklets and marshes, skirting woods, avoiding mountains, sometimes fighting through *chaparral*. But they always made substantially for the north-east.

Near midnight they bivouacked in a wood by the side of a little stream; and their sleep was even sounder than common

for their march had been most wearisome, and with the faithful Lion for a sentinel, there was small danger of being surprised. However, they saw no traces of Indians, although they were now on the borders of the lands where they were said to be numerous; and, although Ike averred that in his previous wanderings he had encountered them more than once, their track was happily avoided on the present occasion.

Towards daylight they again resumed their journey, and resolute as Gifford had been in keeping his word, his heart half failed him as he found that after all the great distance they had travelled—for they must now be more than fifty miles from Armstrong's Bar—his companion insisted on proceeding still further. The aspect of the country had now altogether changed. The smooth, vernal character of the plain had given place to the rugged wildness of a mountainous district, and each step appeared to be taking them higher. The luxuriant clambering vines which thickened the *chaparral* of the lower country disappeared, and were replaced by scrubby oaks, or hardy, jagged evergreens. The redwoods grew scantier of foliage, and pointed upwards with sharper pencils. The atmosphere grew more rarefied, while its temperature fell. They were evidently some thousands of feet above the level of the sea. Still the simpleton insisted that they should continue to push on.

It is not to be supposed that during this strange journey Ike had remained absolutely silent as to its object. On the contrary, when they had left the settlement well behind them—when they had cut themselves adrift, as it were, from all other human knowledge or sympathy, he began to drop hints whence Gifford was not slow to draw some enlightenment touching his hopes and purposes. But Ike was not far from wrong when he anticipated that the knowledge thus suggested might, at the outset, have led Hugh to abandon the enterprise. It was clear that, whatever his weaknesses otherwise, his sagacity was not at fault when he declined to be more communicative until that enterprise had been seriously undertaken.

The sun was mounting fast in the heavens, and was several hours high when Hugh began to think it was time to take a stand, and absolutely to refuse to go further. They had truly escaped the Indians thus far, but who should say how long that good fortune would last? At any moment they were liable to be captured, and, in the temper the savages were known to be, it was ten to one their lives would prove the sacrifice of a mere hare-brained, profitless act of temerity. Hugh pondered as to how he could explain his views and his determination to Ike in

a manner such as would avoid hurting his feelings and invite h acquiescence. But, just as the words were on his lips, the latte who had always led the way, suddenly dismounted, and desire Gifford to follow his example.

They were in a wide valley, enclosed on either hand by hig mountains, and they had been advancing up this valley for som miles. As they advanced the valley narrowed, and at what ap peared to be its end—which they had now reached—a wa of gray basaltic rocks rose, frowning, to a great height, and bar red their further progress. This wall seemed quite impervious and when Ike fastened the horses with his lariat, and made pre parations for proceeding on foot, Gifford glanced curiously abou on every side to see by what path he intended to make his way. But Ike, beckoning him to follow, strode straight through the bush as if for the base of the precipice, and Hugh and Lion followed.

When he got close to the bottom of the rock, Ike turned to the right, tracing its line for a space of two hundred yards and; when Hugh had accomplished this distance, he saw a singular rift or cleavage, bearing inwards at a very oblique angle to the left, and apparently as straight as if some sharp and tremendous instru- ment had split the mountain at a blow from top to base. Op- posite this passage was a confused maze of brush and tangle, which seemed as impenetrable as the rock itself. Here the guide paused, and called to his dog, who came up promptly at the word.

"In! in! Lion!" cried Ike, and Lion instantly dashed into a small aperture which had escaped Gifford's eye. "It's jest as well," explained Ike, "to clear the way, seein' it's a likely good place for snakes and sech cattle." In a moment more he was at Lion's heels, and following him up the gorge.

As they went on the air became icily cold. Such, too, was the height of the rocks and the extreme narrowness of the pass, that before they had gone many steps it became almost dark, and Gifford quite needed the assistance of his companions to find his way. For a distance which seemed interminable, but which in reality was about half a mile, Ike followed his four-footed predecessor silently on. Neither made any pause, and it was evi dent that the place was well known to both.

At last they emerged in a space which was very like th apex of an inverted cone. Ranged around in an almost exact circle, precipitous mountains towered majestically in the air to a vast a height, that while their bases were sable, their peaks wer

the most delicate ethereal blue. The bottom of the ravine, an area of perhaps half a dozen acres, was covered with volnic stones, mingled with the emerald green of patches of herbe, and the grizzly, moss-grown gray of venerable trees. Scatted about were many heavy slabs of stone, some of which were ckened as by the action of fire. The lower steeps of the ountain were masked by innumerable parallel evergreens, which ade up in numbers what they lacked in denseness of foliage, d which all pointed monotonously upwards.

When they arrived at the centre of this remarkable retreat, e for the first time turned and looked Gifford full in the face th an indescribable expression of triumph. The dog, Lion, too, if knowing that after his toilsome march all that was expected him was performed, lay quietly down, and surveyed the scene th a look of complacent satisfaction.

"Well, Ike," said Hugh, after such a pause as he thought afded ample opportunity for explanation. "Well, Ike! here are, after all our trouble, and what next?" At which Ike ghed aloud, as though one of the most mirth-exciting jokes d been perpetrated of which he had ever been cognizant, and on, pointing his nose in the air, attested his sympathy by giv- vent to a long, joyous howl. "What next?" repeated Hugh, newhat impatiently.

"What next!" echoed the simpleton, as he dragged up and rturned a huge slab of stone which lay directly at his quester's feet. "What next! Why, THIS!"

Gifford started back with a cry of astonishment and delight. e ground beneath his feet was literally lined with gold. Some gments under the stone had been certainly placed there by Ike the way of a *coup de theatre*, but the richness of the soil was quite ruine enough to need no artificial setting off. He rushed ftly from place to place, turning over the stones, striking up soil here and there with his knife, lifting the great nuggets had accumulated to make sure of their reality, doing all he ld think of, in a word, to test the truth of the existence of the asures the place unquestionably contained.

The valley was an absolute pocket of the precious metal; and re lay there within easy reach of surface digging, the value of illion of dollars in gold.

"All your'n, all your'n!" cried Ike, dancing now in quite a oxysm of joy. "All your'n! A present from me and Lion! r're rich now! Ye kin do all ye want to in the world! And -all—thanks to me and Lion!" and the poor fellow went into

peals of idiotic laughter, and finally threw himself on the greensward and burst into a hysterical passion of tears.

It was true. It was fulfilled suddenly, indeed, and not in the way he expected or thought it would have been; but the dream and the hope of Hugh Gifford's life were accomplished at last, and he was rich.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

Hot, smoky August! With the golden grain bowing and tilting in the breezeless air, and the short-cropped grass, interlaced with long lines of its own stolen hay giving forth perfume indeed, but beginning sharply to complain of the want of moisture. With the apples in the orchards blushing deeper and deeper, and the long, long swells of distant greenwoods broken and flecked with the crimson glories of the coming fall. With the hazy languor pervading everything which tells of fruition accomplished, and basking, voluptuous rest for man and beast during the pause which comes between the seasons.

When Hugh Gifford complained of New England—of her bitter climate, her straight, formal roads, her dull, commonplace architecture, her barren scenery, he was very ungrateful for what he himself had seen and enjoyed among the hills of Berkshire. Scarcely a spot on the continent affords more lovely views, more romantic vales, more charming little highland tarns, than the neighborhood of Lenox and Stockbridge. Far less grand indeed than the famous lake district of the mother country, it is scarcely less picturesque and captivating. But poor Hugh, like most of us, was swayed and tinged in his estimate of things without by the condition of things within. The young life had been so jaundiced and embittered, that it was not to be wondered at that scenes the remotest from those among which it had been passed were idealized always as the most beautiful. There is little romance in the outer world when a cloud is on the soul, and the Vale of Cashmere itself must have been anything but paradise to a captive.

Not but that Hugh's strictures and complaints of man and nature in New England were just and sound enough; they were both; but, like most censors, he only told part of the truth, so

that without being unfaithful as to the letter, he conveyed but a partial picture as to the spirit. When he blamed the New Englanders as sordid and grasping, he should also have borne witness that they were wonderfully vigorous and industrious. When he found just fault with the narrowness and prejudice of their manners, he might fairly have acknowledged the general uprightness and purity of their morals. When he pointed out the evidences of their weakness, he ought also to have indicated the sources of their strength. But few can afford to be truly just when speaking of countries and peoples; and it will always happen that in the court which, on such subjects, regulates the world's opinion, there will be a hundred advocates to a single judge.

There are compensations in seasons, as there are apt to be in the characters of mankind; and if the winters and springs of Massachusetts are cruel and inhospitable—if their very mention reminds us, with a shiver, of Plymouth Rock and the Mayflower—noble but most uncomfortable reminiscences!—it should be owned that her summers and autumns are proportionably inviting and delightful. There can be no season anywhere more delicious than the balmy Indian summer; and brief though it be, nowhere are its choicest attractions more profusely bestowed than in Massachusetts.

It was not time, properly, for the Indian summer; but, as often happens, something very like that season presented itself towards the last of August by way of precursor. The red evening sun was streaming aslant the broad fields and sprinkling trees of John Chester's farm at East Canaan—a nice, large farm, with a brown old wooden mansion, and a red old wooden barn, of much greater size, overlooking it hard by. The land lay on a wide slope, which inclined towards the south; and a silver rivulet, which was parallel to the high road, went trickling on its way at its base. Facing this stream was the farm-house, with a piazza on two sides, and windows coming to the floor in the sitting-room and parlor, which respectively flanked the entrance-hall. The windows of the sitting-room were wide open, and showed to any one passing without, the quaint, old-fashioned furniture, mingled here and there with some modern innovation, of the apartment within. They showed, too, a young lady seated in a rocking-chair, and an old gentleman seated in an easy-chair on either side of a table; and that young lady seemed occupied with a letter which she held in her hand, while the old gentleman was equally absorbed with a child's slate.

The girl was very beautiful. She has been before described in these pages as being fair, very fair, with hair of gold and ski

of pearl, and as having one charm rare in a New England girl, a low, musical voice, and another not so rare, a sweetly winning smile. To read her letters, or perhaps to be told the substance of her usual discourse, one might wonder how on earth Hugh Gifford could have fallen in love, or fancied he had fallen in love, with her; but to see and to hear her was far different. Then the matter was simple enough. He had seen this lovely creature, become intoxicated with her beauty, and straightway endowed her with all the preconceived attractions of an ideal mistress he had, ever since boyhood, been busily creating and putting together.

The man was all lines. Every muscle showed through his hardy, weather-beaten face, and his stringy mottled hands. His hair was iron-gray, close clipped, and grew low on his wrinkled forehead. The mouth was flat, but not ungarnished with humorous lines, and his deep-set eyes were of a light, twinkling blue. His chin and lips were shaven, but a fringe of pepper-and-salt beard, hard and bristly, ran round his face from ear to ear. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and occasionally dried his beady brows with a silk handkerchief.

"It's more'n two year and four months," observed this personage, looking up incidentally from his calculations. He kept his teeth very close together, apparently for fear of spilling something. "And it was to be for two year," he added, conclusively.

"Yes, pa."

"Which, seein' Gaycow's turned his money twice, let alone clearin' off the factory at Persepolis, and keepin' the store a-goin' at Canaan Centre, seems a heap o' time; don't it, now?"

"Yes, pa."

"Folks has to fly round and be up to time now-a-days. They don't allow me no four months, I notice, when the int'rest on the mo'gage comes doo. When Deacon Plodge put the new roof to our barn the fall arter the Pennefeathers sold their hay at eighteen-fifty, I only gittin' eighteen-twenty-five, I put it to ye now, did he wait four months afore sendin' in his little account?"

"No, pa."

"That there changeable silk o' your'n—ye had that the time Gaycow come to board with us; they didn't wait no four months for that, nor nuthin,' when they intermated they'd like their pay?"

"No, pa."

"And when we had to subscribe to send the Rev. Mr. Baubee

to Europe, to cure his browncheeters, he wanted it afore he went, may be, and not arterwards?"

"But, pa, people can't measure time for engagements just as if they were bills, you know."

"I dunno; some folks does. Look at Gaycow; he's a business man, he is. You know what he said the time of his grandma's funeral? It was a Saturday afternoon, ye know, over to Stockbridge; and Saturday bein' an awful busy day, Canaan folks sniggered some to think 'twould put him out; but he had the work all done, and the cash all balanced, and everything put through in good shape, and arrived jest as people was sneerin' he wouldn't come to his own father's mother's funeral, and jest as the coffin was bein' lugged out o' the house. And says he, 'Business fust and pleasure afterwards'; so from that day, I says allers to myself, Gaycow's bound to be a rich man."

"I think it was a very unfeeling speech."

"Onfeelin'! It didn't hurt nobody, did it? It didn't set the old lady back any, I reckon; and it showed Gaycow never wasted his time. He's a different man, I take it, from Hugh Gifford."

"Yes," sighed Virginia, "very different."

"One on 'em," said Mr. Chester, ejecting something into a box of sand near by, and afterwards speaking with more facility; "one on 'em's a business man, and the other ain't; that's all there is about it."

"Hugh was bred to a profession, pa, and it takes longer to get on in a profession than it does in trade. Besides, he's been unfortunate."

"Unfortinnit! Yes, in never stickin' to anythin'. Purfession! Well, look at our John. He's been at it the same time, and look at him. He's stuck to it, and he's riz from pint to pint, until at last he's goin' to have a Murder. Only last week, he writ me that this fall he'd have a Murder."

"John has a different temperament. It costs him no effort whatever to stick, as you call it, to a single pursuit, he's so steady-going and phlegmatic. Then he's always had an allowance, not much, to be sure, but always enough to keep him."

"Ah, well, it's easy onderratin' of him; and bime by, if he turns out a Dan'el Webster, or a Rufus Choate, ye'll sing anothe song. But settin' him aside, jest think how many there i who've come home from Californy in a year with enough to se 'em up slick and easy for life. Let's hear agen what 'tis he say about it."

Virginia turned the letter she held in her hand, and read from its last page as follows:

". . . During most of my stay in California, then, I have certainly been less fortunate than many others. You are already aware of the losses our company sustained through the dishonesty of one of their number. After that, the yield of gold from the Bar became very small, and it has never been greater since than to afford a very slender margin beyond what has been necessary for bare subsistence. Unlike other gold diggings, ours has been poor and unsatisfactory; and after a trial of many months, I am not disposed to work at Armstrong's Bar any further. The occupation at best is uncongenial to me; but when it is also almost utterly unprofitable, the incentive to its pursuit is indeed small. Notwithstanding this want of success, however, I am not without high hopes for the future in other fields. That good in the world which it seems I am not to do here, I hope to do elsewhere. In a word, I am on the point of leaving California; and trust in a few weeks, or perhaps in less, to be able to follow this letter. It may be within a few days after it reaches you, that I also may be with you; when it is my anticipation to meet the same sympathy and interest in my hopes and prospects which have never been wanting heretofore."

The reader paused here, and read the last sentence a second time; and then paused again, and laid the letter on her lap.

"Now, that ain't what I call a business letter," criticised Mr. Chester, with his teeth close together, for the impediment was accumulating again. "Why don't he say right out how much money he's got? I don't kear a darn 'bout sympathy, nor yit interest, nuther, 'cept the interest on my mo'gage. I put it to ye now, ain't a bargain a bargain?"

"Yes, pa."

"Well, the bargain was, that in two years he was to accoomoolate a certain sum, pintin' allers to the easin' of my mo'gage; sech a transaction to be follered by another, to which you bein' the princerpal, with my consent."

"Yes, pa."

"Well, now, Virginny, it looks to me as if nuther on ye was so set on carryin' out that transaction as ye was two year ago."

"Does it, pa?"

"It looks to me," continued Mr. Chester, drawing his lines closer and harder, and eyeing his daughter in a gimblety sort of fashion, "as if nuther on ye'd fret much if that 'ere transaction was laid on the table."

"Yes, pa."

"It looks to me," he proceeded, expectorating boldly, and coming more confident and free of speech as a consequent, "if one side of a bargain bein' broke, the other gits sot free, a matter of course."

Virginia said nothing, but kept looking at the letter in l lap.

"Symperthies and prospecs," observed her father, philosop cally, after a reasonable pause for a reply, "air very good thin in their way, but they won't keep the pot a boilin', nor the m a goin'. Talkin' of which," he added, casually, "have you se that 'ere new span of Gaycow's?"

No, Virginia hadn't.

"Talk to me o' yer Cuticle Flips," said Mr. Chester, with e thusiasm. "Why, they ain't nowhere. It's the pootiest turnc I ever see, and if even the Baubee grays kin hold a candle that span, ye kin boot me, that's all!"

"I heard the horses were very handsome."

"And that 'ere new house front o' his'n," went on pa, rha sodically; "it mayn't be the Baubee Parthenon, but its a likeli elevation, to my way o' thinkin'. I heer'n tell it was moddled c the Alhambry."

"Ah!"

"What with the Canaan Varieties, and the Persepolis Fa tory, he can't be a rakin' in less than three thousand dollars year."

"Every one says he's growing rich."

"Puttin' of it short, Virginny," concluded Mr. Chester, fixin his lines at their sternest tension, and heavily augmenting th contents of the sand-box—"Puttin' of it short, if John gits Murder, I think the least you kin do is to clear off that mo'gage

"If Hugh brings back money——" began Virginia, faintly.

"Don't run away with that idee now, I warn ye. I nev know'd a man yit who'd made money who was ashamed to sa so. Why should they be? Seein' it makes 'em pop'lar and r spected, and gives 'em credick and importance with their fell men? I don't bet much on a young man goin' on thirty who tra els excloosive on his symperthies and prospecs. Travellin' c new roofs and mo'gages; or, may be," with a keen concentr tion of the facial lines on his daughter, "or, may be, travelli on new spans and Alhambrys soots *my* style. There's alle time for symperthizin' and prospectin' arter folks gits ahead the world; and it's a blamed bad sign if they take to't wh they're behindhand."

"We can't expect people to be all alike, pa. Hugh w

brought up very differently from many we know. He is a very sensitive man and has been highly educated, and naturally writes and feels as many wouldn't."

"Has his eddication pinted out any gold mines? Has bein' sensitive made him any cuter on the main chance? This here ain't no country for palaverin' and splittin' hairs, but for workin' and makin' money in. I tell ye what it is, Virginny, I'm in the best kind of a position to judge about these things. I married poor; not but I allers loved your mother as long as she lived, poor thing; but, pecooniarily speaking, that 'ere ill-judged transaction has been pullin' of me back all my life. Its been the cause of mo'gages and leaky roofs and poor hay, and a heap o' troubles besides. I've bin a racin' all my days to git even on that fust mistake. I don't want to offer to coerce ye, far from it; but I put it to ye to choose atween abundance and stent, comfort and onsartainty, Gifford and Gaycow. Fur be it from me to offer to set ye agin' your future happiness; and if the mo'gage is made all right, I won't say boo, leastways unless I'm asked; in which case, as a father, I still think I should say Gaycow."

With this statement Mr. Chester departed, in the belief that a favorable period had arrived for leaving his daughter to her own reflections. Perhaps his sagacity was not at fault when he abstained from urging his wishes more strenuously. The exhibition of a strong will often provokes opposition where a mere amiable preference will enlist concurrence; a probability which many a parent, from the time of old Capulet downwards, has forgotten, to his own detriment, but to which the Yankee farmer was fully alive. He was not ignorant, too, that he had formidable allies fighting on his side; allies whose aid was unremitting, and of a character which he had seldom known to fail. The constant reference of all hopes and purposes to the most sordid passions which find entrance in the human breast, on the part of all who came in contact with her—the feminine love of dress, and the scarcely less potent love of the elegant and costly in furniture and equipage—the bitter disappointment she felt at heart on the score of Hugh's apparent failure—all these were perpetually at work to second her father's wish to break off the engagement. There was also a further emotion in Virginia's breast, which had ever been latent there, but which might have remained inactive or ultimately have been altogether extinguished but for the other verifying causes. This was a certain fear of Gifford, which had its rise in a conviction of his ability to detect, and his readiness to condemn, various tastes and weaknesses whose indul-

gence it would quite mar the pleasure of her life to forego. She knew—as most women, even if they are not very intellectual are swift to know—that his admiration for her beauty, at first so undisguised, would not always blind him to qualities which lay behind it; and she shrank from the discovery and its consequences.

There was none of this sort of apprehension mingled with her thoughts of Gaycow. If she was fond of dress, he was fond of dress. If she admired showy furniture and stylish equipages, he admired them as well. If she derived an extravagant gratification from exciting the envy and wonder of Canaan, it was a passion wherein he could fully participate. If she could glory in a turn-out that eclipsed the Baubee grays—could exult in paling the glow-worm of a Parthenon before the sun of an Alhambra—were not these the objects of *his* choicest ambition?

To do Virginia justice, there was, however, enough of her to enable her to despise Gaycow; but she thought it might perhaps be better to despise than be despised. This may not be an unnatural illusion, even if the alternative is soundly put; the misery it has occasioned, and every day does occasion, many a woman who reads these pages can attest. Virginia knew that the faculties which enabled Mr. Gaycow to buy cheap and sell dear; to delude his customers into paying a larger profit than his capital and industry fairly earned; to save interest by putting off payment, and to make it by insisting upon its addition to accounts owing to himself; to get the better, by one device or another, in short, of three-fourths of those with whom he came in contact; Virginia knew that these faculties, if not utterly and comprehensively base, were still among the lowest and least worthy which a man could possess. She knew that if they enabled him to heap up millions, he would still be by far the inferior of Hugh Gifford, standing unfriended and without a dollar. But, unhappily, she also knew that the world by which she was surrounded would not agree with her in this estimate; and to captivate, subdue, outshine the world, to conquer its suffrage, and taste to the full its pleasures, were objects too darling to be entirely foregone. Her soul recoiled too with genuine disgust at the prospect of a long career of poverty—perhaps even want—as the bride of a man whom the Canaanites were unlikely ever to delight to honor; a poor, paltry, gossiping village circle, perhaps; but was it not better to despise than to be despised!

When she contemplated the prospect of Hugh's returning rich and prosperous, such a contrast as this never suggested itself to her mind. She only thought that young men who went away

om home poor, were expected to make and bring home their rtunes as matters of course. There was something horribly lank and dreary in the idea of a young man coming home poorer an he went! Canaan might stand much, but nothing so mad s that. The opinion of the world may be worthless enough, ut since we are compelled to live in it, for comfort's sake, if othing else, we must really pay it some little deference. What sickening sensation it would be to be dusted by the triumphal hariot of Gaycow; to be smiled upon with cold commiseration y the Pastile F. Baubees; to be openly sneered at by the Penifeathers; to be calmly cut by that Belle Tarbox who had married so excellent a Thing in fish! Ugh! it must not—could not —be thought of.

Sometimes nobler thoughts would rise in Virginia's breast, and she would say to herself, that if Hugh were unhappy, so much the greater his need for consolation; that if fortune proved faithless to him, so much the more her cause to be faithful; that, after all, riches of any material sort might take wings to themselves and fly away; how, for example, would she like to be a poor Mr. Gaycow? but that a true and honest love had no wings after they had once borne it to a lasting resting-place. Besides —and here the selfish element came in again—Hugh was an intellectual man, and such men often made their mark and took the world by storm in the long run, even when insignificant enough and little heeded at the outset. Such a triumph she thought was something like that of true love, in that it could not be taken or tricked away by the caprices of fortune.

Such were Virginia's thoughts as she gazed forth on that smoky August evening, as the sun went down in his blood-red glory, and the yellow moon, like a disk of burnished gold, sailed slowly up in the opposite sky. She had to think gravely, and to decide quickly too; for the same moon that looked pityingly down upon her troubled counsels, looked down on the trackless ocean as well, and lighted the ship which bore her betrothed as it breasted the waves which rolled about his home.

CHAPTER II.

"ANOTHER year!"

"Only, if you think it best, Virginia. I propose that you shall have the option. For me, I am ready at any time—now, this week if you will—to fulfil our engagement."

"But, you see, father thinks that—that under all the circumstances it would be so imprudent,—so——"

"Precisely. And for that reason I propose the alternative."

"That would make six years, Hugh."

"I know. Too long, in all fairness, to keep any girl waiting; I acknowledge that; but the decision must rest with herself. There is no obligation here, save on the man's part."

"I'm sure I've never changed, Hugh," her voice trembled a little as she spoke, "but if I can escape being thought undutiful and rash——"

"You had rather do so. That seems rational enough, and I quite agree it would be wise to avoid such an imputation. It is only reasonable, I repeat, that since my share of the contract appears to have been only partially kept—I mean since I am not ready to do what your papa stipulated for, and I agreed to—that you should have the choice of waiting still further, or—or of holding yourself entirely absolved."

Virginia looked at him. He looked older than when she saw him last, by more than two years. His face was tanned and roughened, too, so that the delicate cutting of the features, and the rather feminine beauty of the complexion, had no longer the attractions they used to have. Then, his clothes! If he wished to appear to advantage before his lady love, what persuaded Gifford to wear that dark, rusty, suit which was so suspiciously like the one she had last seen him wear? She bit her lips with a scarcely concealed vexation, and he followed her eyes with a pained, and yet curious smile.

"Pray understand, Virginia, that in proposing our immediate marriage, I consider myself quite in a position to support a wife, and that there does not seem to me the least reason to fear that my position will become worse than it now is."

"I understand," she said. It was in a tone which implied that she did not think it possible.

"So that," continued Gifford, quietly, "there need be no apehension on your part of burthening me, prematurely, with such sponsibilities. You may be sure there is no danger of that."

Virginia knew that she had not thought of the contingency in ecisely such a bearing. She knew that her sole reflections had en of hardship to herself in foregoing competency—of wedding spectable poverty when she had expected easy abundance. here was something wretchedly disgusting to her in this placid ntemplation of a mere honest, homely subsistence in place of e style, the fashion, the elegance she had so often thought of, earned for, and anticipated; and she heaved a deep, woeful gh.

"The chances are," said Hugh, "indeed, that my prospects ay be better rather than worse. Still I had rather you did ot look forward to any material change for some years to me."

She made an impatient gesture. "Why should I look for ange at all?" she exclaimed, with ill suppressed bitterness. "I n only a plain farmer's daughter; and a poor one at that. I ght to content myself, I take it, to stay in the position I was rn in without looking to rise out of it."

"Most people," said Gifford, regarding her steadily, "in this untry strive to rise in the world. It may be right, or it may e wrong. It may, or not, make them happier. But such is the et; and there is nothing unusual or blamable in such an ambion. But I infer, from what you say, that you don't care to ait for another year—is it so?"

"I don't quite know what to say," answered Virginia, hesitaing. "You see, father has run away with an idea that you houldn't have come home unless—unless——"

"Unless I had made a fortune?"

"At least, without being better off than you went. And he's ore strict and exacting about such things than ever. And ohn being away—and mother gone, you know—I being an nly child, and to leave him contrary to his will, and quite lone——"

"True. It is natural and right that you should hesitate."

There was a mixture of truth and deceit—of pathos and hyocricy—in what Virginia said that too often colors the argutents of poor, frail mortals. Her father knew all she did about ifford's position. He was more anxious than not to get her off s hands, so that she went off handsomely. The rest of it was nuine enough. Hugh put the best acceptation upon the ole.

"Let the matter be referred to your father, then," he said, "and, with his aid and counsel, come to your decision."

If it be true that a man loves the meat in his youth he cannot endure in his age, and that such fickleness involves no moral delinquency, I cannot see the justice of the eternal censures levelled against changes in matters of the heart. It may be urged that Hugh Gifford never really loved Virginia Chester, since all the time that he was speaking with her, the image of Marian Rooke was conjured up beside her, and constantly supplying the means for invidious comparisons. But, whether he ever had or not, he was firmly resolved that no chance for real happiness should be lost to her through him, so far as it was clear that he could supply it. There may be various opinions as to the course he was pursuing; some men, under all the circumstances, might have behaved differently and better; some might have behaved differently and worse; but, as always, we have to deal not with what he might have done, but with what Gifford actually did.

This was within a week of the time when Virginia had received his letter, so that her father and herself had had ample time to discuss the question in all its possible lights and bearings. Gifford had arrived at New York, and almost directly after made his way to Canaan, and unfolded himself as has been related. As he walked slowly back to the village tavern where he had left his slender luggage, he passed a very large and flaunting shop, over which, in letters of gold, was suspended the following legend:

ALPHONSO GAYCOW AND CO.,

W. I. GOODS, DRY GOODS, AND GENERAL PRODUCE.

In front of this shop stood a vehicle, or rather the skeleton of a vehicle, tastefully painted in lake and gold, and weighing apparently about fifty or sixty pounds. To this vehicle were attached two prodigiously tall bay horses, well groomed and harnessed, and in a high state of impatience. Hugh looked at the establishment with some surprise, as being a somewhat unusual turn-out for a quiet country neighborhood; but he had not the remotest idea how far it or its owner, the flashy shopkeeper aforesaid, might have any effect upon his own matrimonial prospects.

The aid and counsel of Mr. Chester, who was ever of a pru-

al turn, were concise and pointed enough. He saw Virginia mediately after her *fiance's* departure, and listened to her recital the conversation with interest and impatience.

"Wait another year!" he exclaimed, as this proposal was ouched upon. "Why, he'll want ye to wait till ye look like ne last of pea-time, and no one else 'll have ye."

Virginia smiled, and glanced at the old-fashioned mirror over he mantel with an assurance that expressed a mind at ease on hat point, if upon no other.

"I know—I know," said her parent, answering the glance. 'I know you're dreadful handsome—no pootier girl in Canaan, no, ot in Centre, East or West; but looks is looks, and don't last llers. However, that's neither here nor there. Here's the pint: ow much did he say he was wuth?"

"Why, pa, I didn't ask him that."

"Didn't ask him?"

"No, pa, how should I?"

Pa gazed at his offspring curiously for a while, as though she ad suddenly become a highly interesting psychological study. He was reflecting, perhaps, that for his part he should hardly have sked Gifford anything else. Then a vision dawned upon him s he rolled over his quid, and knotted and unknotted his astute ountenance, that possibly there might be some indelicacy in a young lady thus situated putting so leading a question, and that, fter all, it left the whole field of interesting inquiry open to his own strictly appropriate investigation.

"He looks kind o' seedy, don't he?" he asked indirectly.

"I'm afraid, poor fellow, he isn't too rich," sighed Virginia.

"Poor fellow!" echoed Mr. Chester. "Poor fellow! Come now, don't. It ain't so bad's all that comes to, is it?"

"I don't know what you mean by as bad as that comes to," cried Virginia, pettishly. "But it seems to me if he had anything to speak of, he wouldn't keep so still about it."

"It ain't the way in Canaan, that's a fact. But may be he means to surprise ye."

"No. He says if we marry now, there'll be no material change—for the better he means—anyhow for some years."

"But he wants ye to wait another fust?"

"He doesn't want me to, or not to; but to do as I like, he ys, and as you think best."

Mr. Chester chewed on for some time in contemplative silence. I bin round to the tavern," he observed, at length, thoughtlly, "and see his luggage. Things was so I couldn't look int'

the insides of all on 'em; but the gen'ral aspect is blamed skeary."

"You shouldn't have done that, pa," said Virginia, coloring.

"It was quite permiscuous and onbeknown. Buyin' a plug of terbakker, may be, and happenin' round the house arterwards. Besides, they was all a lookin' at it."

"All! Who?"

"Who? Why, Jake Barker, and Jim Pennifeather, and Gaycow, and all on 'em; bein' one o'clock and all hum to dinner. East Canaan's dull jest now, and news is news."

"Did he—did Alphonso—know who it was that had come?"

"Bless ye, yes; and all about it; and so does all Canaan. And the hull place is watchin' the thing to see how the cat'll jump."

Virginia reddened more than before. "You mean to see whether my engagement with Mr. Gifford is broken off or not?"

"Sartain. There's a gin'ral feelin' that if he's come back empty-handed—and it looks plaguey like it—that it's darned bad treatmemt; and that there ain't a gal in Canaan'd put up with it; leastways no gal not with your advantages. And old Jake, bein' a fifty year friend, as I may say, went so fur as to tell me that it was my dooty to put my foot down, and that if Mr. Baubee was to hum he'd put a stop to the hull thing quicker!" and Mr. Chester screwed his face up into a tight knot, spat profusely into the sand-box, and looked inquiringly at his daughter.

"It's no one's business what I choose to do in the matter, pa," she replied, with some heat, "any more than it is to investigate Mr. Gifford's luggage."

"Well, Canaan will be Canaan, ye know, Virginny, and the folks feel as though they ought to be up to everythink. If they thought ye was no account, they wouldn't be so curus."

"Consoling, certainly. The more insignificant a person is, the less they'll be pestered with impertinent curiosity."

"Jest so. Talkin' of beans," continued Mr. Chester, after a short pause, "there was Alphonsy's new turn-out front o' the store, as large as life. And comin' down Evergreen Avenoo there was Amandy Stokes in that raspin' gownd you call a Murray Ann Tick. No sooner on Main Street, than down she sails straight for the store. So I halted right round our corner, and peeked a spell, and, sure enough, out come Gaycow and hists her into the wagon, and away they went up the street as though they was sent for!"

No answer.

"I reckon," observed Mr. Chester, pleasantly, "they was in' for a nice drive to Crab-apple Grove; or may be to Spy nd."

Virginia was silent still.

'I heer'n tell," continued her father, after another pause, "the odge gals bein' well posted on such truck, that 'ere Murray n Tick cost more'n four dollars a-yard."

'It couldn't!" cried Virginia, breaking out violently; "three-l-a-half at the outside, and dear at that!"

Mr. Chester shook his head sorrowfully: "Hen Splodge's n clerk to A. B. Cookey and Co.'s, in Bosting, five year, goin' six, Virginny. I reckon the gals is posted on them things, ıny one is. Besides," he added, reflectively, "Gaycow's art, he is, and I don't think, as things are goin', he'd kear to ve out anything at three-and-a-half."

'Nonsense, pa; he wouldn't think of such a thing. And wouldn't drive that homely girl out at all, if Hugh Gifford sn't here."

'Why," queried pa, ingenuously, "what's that got to do with "

'Never mind. What is it you want me to say?"

'Say! What about?"

'Why, to Mr. Gifford, to be sure. He's coming this evening hear what you think, and we're to have an understanding, and that."

"And you don't know, honest, how much he's wuth?"

"No."

"When I fust heerd," said Mr. Chester, crossing his legs, and ing off calmly into extraneous reflections—"when I fust erd that Pamelia Staples had married a Flip, I calkilated there s one chance less in Canaan. When Bell Tarbox married t o' the town, it weren't, as you may say, treadin' on no one's s, and I didn't have no call to grumble. But if Amandy kes was to marry a Gaycow! Well, I wouldn't crowd the rners no further than to say, it would be tight papers; but e is sech a thing as kerryin' a joke too fur."

What do you wish me to say to Mr. Gifford?"

I don't go strong for vanity, nor yit pomp; but a stylish in a Murray Ann Tick, behind two lofty pelters that kin go, say, to the inside o' three, is a soarin' sight!"

Think," proceeded the speaker, finding his encomium elicit-o response, "think o' them pelters drawin' proudly up in , of the Alhambry, driv' along showy, and brought up all

standin'. A nigger appears, and bowin' low, throws open th palatial hall. Permiscuous and kind o' careless, Gaycow d scends; Gaycow, lord of every shoe-peg in Persepolis; maste of the hull variety trade in Canaan. He hands down the lad of his ch'ice. She alights, springy and easy, a rustlin', a shinin' and a cracklin'! As she moves, delicate perfooms float upo the air, and folks travellin' along—incloodin' the hull female popu lation of Canaan—bile with envy! Another minute and th portals is closed, closed agin the vulgar herd—for only Canaan' brightest and best is allowed in them dazzlin' halls. Sech woul be the fate of her who weds Alphonsy; sech the lot of a Mrs Gaycow!"

The picture was truly as absurd as it was attractive; but Vir ginia was by no means insensible to the advantages which it sug gested rather than described. It could not be denied that th young trader was daily gaining in wealth, and consequent popu lar estimation. While Gifford appeared to have retrograded, th happy speculator in shoe-pegs and varieties had steadily advanced His wife would be the richest woman in Canaan. She would b known like Lady Clifford to all the country round. Of wha avail were the intellectual qualities, the unproductive talents of Hugh, when weighed against the dollars of his rival?

"With regard to Mr. Gifford, pa," she said, in a confused maz of thought.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Chester, as if to a sudden break in th thread of the conversation, and drawing the lines of his face closer and closer, as he narrowly eyed his daughter. "P'raps you'd like *me* to talk to him a spell?"

She knew instinctively what this meant. It was tantamoun —with Gifford's high spirit, and her father's sordid one—to conclusion likely to be a final one. If Mr. Chester did not eagerl accept the proposal to release Virginia from her promise, h would be sure to annex conditions to postponement, such a would make it practically equivalent to the same thing. Was i her good angel which now pleaded and struggled in Virginia' bosom, urging her to say aloud: "No; the one man I can lov and respect; the other, never. The wealth of the last shall no buy, nor the poverty of the first dismay me. I will marry wha my heart can go with my hand, and take the chance afterwa for fortune."

Whether or no, the struggle in her breast was a fierce o There was much in the girl of the poetic, much that was capa *of a higher* development than she had yet been able to attai *and she* felt that inward conviction which is so unerring, that

an expansion, such an elevation, would be possible were she mated with one of these men, hopeless for ever with the other. There was little doubt she could marry the trader if she chose. His admiration for her beautiful person had long been undisguised, and was indeed a common topic of village tattle. Her known engagement had truly prevented him from making Virginia an offer; but it prevented nothing else. It had not precluded frequent visits since he first came to board in her father's house; profuse compliments, offers of gifts, which she had happily the grace to decline, unmistakable glances at church, in the shop, or in the highway. Moreover, old John Chester, if not as rich as many, was known to be thrifty, and his son was a rising young man; and the family had that savor of respectability which, even among the plutocratic descendants of the Puritans, long residence and a fair name will purchase some share of; so that, all things considered, it was not a bad match even for the rising Gaycow. She could marry him if she chose, but in doing so what did she resign?

Virginia hesitated; and the devil, as usual, was lying in wait for his opportunity. For, as she looked through the open window, across the piazza, through the warm, smoky, air, over the tinkling rivulet, to the high-road on the other side, there dashed by the sumptuous equipage so much extolled, and there—leaning back in his seat, with his air of flippant audacity, chatting with the gorgeous Amanda, whose black eyes and glossy hair were set off by her purple *moire-antique*—drove the prosperous Gaycow in all the bloom of youth and May of dollarhood. Nor, as the vehicle spun gaily by, the handsome horses displaying themselves so consciously as knowing how much they were looked at and admired, was the picture in all its details uncompleted; for, plodding slowly behind, his rusty black clothes well dusted by the carriage which had passed him, came along the road—Hugh Gifford. His head was bowed as if in deep thought, and he paid no regard to anything around him. Onward he trudged in the track of the now distant wheels, until a clump of trees intervened; and he, too, disappeared.

"I suppose you had better speak with him," said Virginia, at last, wearily.

"That's my idee," returned her father, unconscious of what he had seen, but quite pleased and rather surprised by her unqualified assent. "There's many things a man don't feel a call to let on to a gal, he'll tell to her authorized gardeean. I don't want ye to think, Virginny, that I want to coerce ye in any way.

The mo'gage havin' waited some time, kin wait a spell longer, I s'pose; and if, as you say, he agrees to fix things in a year——"

"I didn't say so," interrupted the girl, impatiently; "he said nothing definite—nothing on the subject."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Chester, with an air of great surprise, as if he had been laboring under a complete misconception about the matter. "He didn't say he'd fix the mo'gage in a year! Maybe, then, he ain't a calkilating to fix it at all?"

"I don't know; you can ask him, I suppose."

"Fur be it from me to offer to interfere with your feelings, Virginny;" and the fond father celebrated the progress of his wishes with a fresh quid; "but if that air bargain ain't a goin' to be kerried out, what with Gaycow admirin' you to kill, and John havin' a Murder, and everythink—I'll put it to ye, now; air folks any more likely to rush a thing through in one year, arter they've tried and broke down a tryin' of it in two?"

"I don't know; perhaps not."

"And I don't know, neither," said Mr. Chester, ironically; "but I'll ask, and then, p'raps, I'll find out."

"Don't—don't speak to him too much about that—not at first, pa!" said Virginia, painfully.

"'Bout what?"

"About money."

"Don't be afeard: I'll fetch it in kind o' slantin', so 's he'll tell it all himself."

And he did; at least he received that night from Gifford a clear statement, to the effect that he was by no means prepared to make the stipulated advance, and that he quite agreed with Mr. Chester in the opinion that such a defection on his part, fairly included the waiving of his pretensions to the hand of Virginia, should such a relinquishment be desired by the lady and her family. On the other hand, Hugh expressed a sanguine belief that in another twelvemonth he would be able to compass the difficulty, and his readiness to bind himself to such a compact at the option of the other contracting parties. To this latter proposal Mr. Chester lent a willing ear. A bargain which might bring profit, and could not possibly bring loss—a contract which imposed conditions on one side, leaving the other unshackled—was to him especially grateful, when to him was the prospective profit, and to another the fettering conditions.

He understood, in a general way, that Gifford had been unlucky, but that he did not despond; that he held Virginia to no *promise*, but was willing, in view of unfulfilled expectancies, for at *least* a year longer to be himself so pledged. At the expiration

hat time the Chesters could decide whether they would hold
to the engagement or set him free. It seemed a rather
-sided arrangement, but was frankly offered, and Mr. Ches-
was not the man to let any ultra-chivalrous compunctions
id between himself and the light; therefore, so far as he
concerned, it received his hearty approval and subscription.
Virginia, too, when this was formally proposed to her, although
blushed a little, and her woman's instinct did not fail to teach
there was something mean about it, saw many advantages of
plicity and directness in the plan which commended it to
baser portions of her nature with a force almost impossible
resist.

The struggle was, practically, no other than what goes on with
st people every day: on one side, all that looks most flatter-
to ease, vanity, selfishness, bedecking a road broad and sim-
to follow; on the other, whatever is most uninviting to such
sions, but also something which, difficult and tortuous
ugh it appear, an unerring consciousness for ever whispers
he better, the nobler, the permanently enduring path which
ely will repay the bitter effort which shall now be made to
ow it.

f Virginia could have made her election aright, she would
e grown into a noble and beautiful woman. She was at a
which, taken at the flood, would have led her to no less glori-
a fortune. But she was weak, and she temporized. She
ught the flood would return, at the least, three hundred and
y-five times—a long stretch to look ahead! and she could
ge meanwhile of the shoals and eddies and quicksands which
ht make it unwise to trust it.

When the agreement had been made, Gifford appeared,
ngely enough, to think that it was not sufficiently binding
n himself. He strove to impress upon Virginia that, while
was always to be considered as firmly pledged, she was by no
ns to let that consideration fetter her own wishes, should she
ny time wish the affair at an end. He also assured her—and
an earnestness which betrayed more feeling than he had yet
wn since his return—that he felt *sure* of being within the year
position to satisfy all the conditions, provided she were un-
nged and agreed. Was it the conviction that his own con-
t had not been so ingenuous as it should have been that in-
d this feeling into his manner, on the last evening he sat with
ginia, before his departure from the village? I know not.
ow that there were warm tears on her peach-like cheek, and
he—*for the first and last* time—kissed them away. I know

that there were moments, when only the round harvest looked down upon them, that both Hugh and Virginia each trembling on the brink of foregoing certain cher resolutions. But neither did so; and the next day the v gossips were disconsolate, and the old life went on uncheck for the shabby-looking stranger had gone, and Canaan him no more.

CHAPTER III.

It is, perhaps, needless to confess that all this while I Gifford was a very rich man. How far he was, or was not tified in the course he had thought fit to adopt, is a m wherein casuists are likely to differ. That Virginia gair right, when she plighted her troth, to a share in any advan her betrothed might subsequently acquire, may certainl maintained. That Gifford had a right, if possible, to tes sincerity of her affection, and at least afford himself the sat tion of knowing that her feelings were not solely swayed b terest, may perhaps be allowed. On the whole, scrup judges may be disposed to declare that our hero's ruse dese censure. But I cannot forget that Hugh's early life, anc grovelling spirits which surrounded it, had fostered the qu of suspicion to a degree which was really foreign to his nat and I feel constrained in passing judgment on any crimin take into consideration just such circumstances as these. in vain that we seek to apply arbitrary standards to measur amount of right or wrong which attaches to different indivi for the same act; in vain, at least, so far as the effort is expe to teach anything serviceable, excepting the divergence w exists between human justice and the divine. I therefore l this portion of Hugh's life to such mercy as it may get, con ing myself with describing facts and their fruits, rather with speculating as to motives and their morality.

In the place to which Ichabod had so mysteriously led Gifford found a vast store of gold. It had been his imme desire to bring the company of Armstrong's Bar to partic in the treasure; but this Ike stoutly resisted, reminding I of his promise to reveal to no one the discovery which had made without the consent of the original discoverer. A

romise was at last arranged, to the effect that after the two hould have obtained a certain sum—placed by Ike at a very igh figure—the others were to be apprised of their good fortune, nd invited to share it. Without dwelling on details, it will uffice to record that within three months the adventurers man-ged to extract, and—a far more difficult task—to convey to San Francisco in safety, a sum of three hundred thousand dollars. This sum, Ike insisted, was Gifford's. He would take his share of what might afterwards be found, as one of the company; but the first cream of the placer he positively refused to touch. It was his offering, so far as he had any rights in it, to Hugh; and nothing would satisfy him but its unreserved acceptance. The former knew the obstinacy with which he had to deal too well to combat it openly. He therefore resolved to lay aside a round sum, which, come what might, would furnish the half-wit with a comfortable life-long provision, and for the present to let the subject drop.

It was part of Ike's scheme—and he exhibited throughout a degree of cunning which seemed to his companion quite astonishing—not to return to Armstrong's Bar, or to communicate with its inhabitants, until his own views were successfully carried out. They could contrive to get food, he said, from other points, by striking the trail leading to Downieville, eighteen miles to the west; they could find means to send back the horses to their owners at Yankee Jim's, and could arrange for needful supplies to come by the same route. Money would buy all they wanted; and it was better to take any amount of trouble—haul, pack, or even carry their supplies a distance of twenty miles, rather than run the risk of having their treasure discovered and the spot overrun before they had gathered its fruits.

To the first part of this scheme Gifford demurred, upon the very obvious ground that, should their friends at the Bar hear nothing of them, they would speedily institute researches, and get up a hue and cry which might prove more fatal to their projects than anything else could possibly be. It was finally arranged that a letter should be forwarded from a remote point, which should assure the party of their safety and speedy return rom their expedition, which was described as an experimental ne for the sake of prospecting; and this letter could be—as, ndeed, it was—followed up from time to time by others in a anner to forestall anxiety and keep matters quiet at the Bar.

The other details were consummated as Ike proposed; and lthough the plan involved, as it turned out, all manner of pri-

vations and difficulties, yet they managed to preserve health and strength sufficient to carry out the work, and that with a speed which only those who have known what it is to dig from the earth an enormous daily tribute of gold can quite appreciate.

Midsummer had not come, before, having safely lodged their gold in the vaults of a banker, who, singular to relate, had never yet stopped payment, Gifford and Ike returned to their wondering friends; and, having told as much of their adventures as seemed prudent and had been mutually agreed upon, invited them to emigrate to what they had christened "Lion's Dale" (a name, by the way, which I am glad to see the valley still retains), and, in their turn, to amass fortunes. By this time the scattered bands of Indians had begun to retreat as usual before the advancing pressure of swarming whites, and there was little fear now of an interference or danger which, when Ike first made his discovery, had been so effectual in making it an exclusive one.

In the mean time, more settlers had gathered about the Bar, and there were two new flumes in the course of construction. Discoveries had been made in other places near by, although the gold yield at Armstrong's continued scanty; and the latter, being very accessible and convenient to several lines of travel, was growing in importance as an *entrepot*, irrespective of any value or poverty attributed to its diggings. A post-office was regularly established there, and Uncle Seth was appointed postmaster. The buildings were improved, and the long coveted wooden roof over the principal structure took the place of the "cotting" one. There was every indication that the place would become populous, and the land, consequently, valuable.

Under these circumstance, it was resolved that Luke, Dick Railes, and Ike, together with the Doctor, should form a party for the new diggings, retaining the old home as a base of supplies, and leaving Uncle Seth and the "women folks" to keep possession thereof; and this sensible arrangement had just been carried into effect at the time Hugh Gifford sailed for New York. As for Ike, Hugh would willingly have taken him with himself, but Ike promptly rejected the proposal. He was very well as he was, he said; and certainly there did not appear to be any particular advantage in his removal to the Atlantic States. Hugh had, to be sure, an idea that the poor fellow's mental condition might possibly be improved by travel; or, perchance, by medical advice in the Old World if not in the New. But Dr. Landale thought he saw signs of improvement, which might be checked

r reversed were Ike taken from his present haunts and pursuits, nd this opinion was accepted as conclusive.

Thus it was that Gifford sailed for home with his fortune, quite lone. He had his gold with him, but otherwise he was solitary. ong habit had reconciled him to the companionship of even he most illiterate and unintellectual of the people at the ar. To separate, even from poor Lion, he now found gave im a pain which he had rarely known in parting even from a uman being. His thoughts ranged back over the many event- il scenes they had all seen and braved together. He remembered ith vividness a hundred pictures of the Plains; Castle Arm- trong, with its quaint interior, the colors of the different cattle ho drew it, the very clothes various members of the party wore. le recalled a score of different camp-fires where they had sat nd watched and smoked, and told stories and adventures, in he fitful light of the spluttering green wood as it blazed and parkled on the gloom around. He thought of the first time he aw the friendly chief, Washashaco, as he came up to the brow f the slope and warned his white brethren of impending danger; f the confidence he had felt in the warrior from the outset, and ow that confidence had never been shaken until late in the long, ng day when the little band fought so overwhelming an array of avages; when poor Nahum Pelter had fallen, as it were, in the ery moment of safety and victory, and the swarthy chieftain, like n avenging fury, followed by his red troop of whooping demons, ad bounded into their midst to turn the scale of battle. But om all these memories, and many more which were akin to hem, Gifford's thoughts always came back to fix upon one ob- ct—the green oasis in his dreary, dusty march of life—the usic which had made tolerable the dull, monotonous clangor f commonplace sounds and vulgar voices—the poetry which, om childhood, he had dreamed of and yearned for, but never efore in good faith believed to exist—to the memory of larian.

And, as often as he came back to this thought, he found nother standing, as it were, by its side, and warning him, with n emphasis he could not soften, of the great need there was at he should regard his own honor as well as Marian's memory, id do nothing that should cloud either in his treatment of irginia.

He was rich now, and there was no obstacle to their happy nion; why then should he shudder at such a reflection? It ally seemed that the path of duty lay straight before him, and at the path of duty should also be that of happiness; but, alas!

it was not so. Loyal as Marian had ever been, she had most unwittingly, partly by the effect of continual contrast, partly by a certain way she had of suggesting analysis of character, led Hugh to a sharp and painful perception of the unlovely faults of Virginia's nature. At the same time, the latter had unfortunately been yielding more and more to the influences which tended to increase those faults, and the retrogression was only too obviously reflected in her letters.

On the passage home, then, Gifford, in a blurred and bewildered sort of way, had sketched out for himself a plan of operations which were intended, as we have seen, to test the reality and the steadfastness of Virgina's affection. He determined to afford her every possible opportunity to hold him to his engagement—every possible incentive, save the single one of knowing his altered circumstances. If she would not adhere to his fortunes as a poor man, Hugh thought he might fairly escape from the tie as a rich one. There was certainly no particular originality about the idea; but it was eminently practical, since scarcely any one in the world could possibly betray him, and it also had the merit of extreme simplicity. Straightway, on his arrival, he commenced to reduce it to practice; and having thus wasted no time in attending to what he could not avoid regarding as an honorable obligation, he now thought, with a strange notion of having earned some compensation floating in his mind, that he had a right to try and find Marian.

Hugh had no inclination to seek out any of his relations. None of them, as he well knew, would care a straw to see him unless he came with a fortified assurance that he was well to do in the world, and such information would be likely to defeat his plans, to say nothing of the fact that its being essential to a welcome, very naturally made him indifferent to those who would exact it. And yet, although his kinsmen were otherwise hard and base-minded men, in this particular respect they differed not from most New Englanders around them. It is inevitable that an exaggerated value should attach to wealth where no other title or passport to reverence and consideration is acknowledged. The sordid tone which pervades much American society has its origin not in the fact that people are born more selfish and grasping there than elsewhere, but because they are taught from their youth up that gold is the only good, and find that democracy has done too much to establish the maxim. There is no way to reason this evil out of existence, any more than to make water run up hill, save by reversing political conditions or the laws of gravity. The systems of man are for ever imperfect, and it is by

ans certain that because there are evils in oligarchy a
ıg plutocracy is altogether free of them.
thing at least is certain, which is, that to dig their heads
riche into bushes of brag, and to diligently ostracize those
re to tell them the truth, is not the way for my country-
purge their system of its ills, and make what they would
model worthy of universal imitation. A nation is in as
'ay as a man is when it cannot endure to be told of its
and because some people have exaggerated, or misrepre-
those faults in times past, is no reason why they should be
maintained to be virtues for all time to come. But having
used for digression before now, as well as for unfair strict-
ı national manners, let me be wary and return to my

urned his back, then, on Boston almost as soon as he
his face there. The best society, mutual admiration or
he guarded amusements, the secluded homes of the better
where was breathed a strange atmosphere, compounded
al portions the Puritan and the Sybarite, the hearty
ş of *condiscipuli*, even at the neighbor Alma Mater he once
ed—all these were forbidden joys to one who, like Gifford,
nmitted two capital sins ; he had gone away from their
ınd he had come back poor. Rarely does Boston forgive
; crime ; the second, never.
ı did, indeed, go to see his old friend and fellow student,
hester ; and John Chester proved an exception to the gen-
e, for he shook the wanderer warmly by the hand, and
d to see him, notwithstanding he came back poor, and
ıstanding he himself had a Murder. Still, Hugh saw, or
he saw, something a little stiff and frightened in John's
—something a little furtive and watchful, as if somebody
vitness perchance this anomalous cordiality to one who
ıe away and come back poor ; something which seemed
:ate that such cordiality besides being "outré" and un-
ıad also a customary penalty attached, which John would
evade. Perhaps Hugh was mistaken ; very reserved men
:cially apt to notice little frigidities or acerbities of man-
)thers ; but he could not help thinking that if his ostensi-
erty were to continue until John got two or three more
s, he would be less welcome even than he was at

heard the statement of Gifford's arrangement with his
ith a puzzled air, and seemed twice or thrice to be upon
nt of saying something which again caution restrained.

The truth was, John felt heartily ashamed of the air of meanne which appeared in the whole matter, and thought his friend bac treated; but he did not quite like to say so. He feared Hu was of too speculative and discursive a turn to prosper, and co ceived that any incentive which was likely to combat or neutra ize such a predisposition would have a good effect. I am afrai too, that Boston was saturating John over-much with those vie of expediency and "getting ahead" in life, which in his mo callow years he had made bold to despise in his sagacious fathe It is a hard thing to live always at Rome, and yet not feel an think, not less than do, even as the Romans.

"What d'ye mean to do?" he asked, incidentally, before the parted. "Of course you have some plans for making mone What are they?"

"To tell the truth, I have not made up my mind," preva cated Hugh.

"Time you had, I should think. Folks here are terribly ha on what they think an aimless or discursive sort of life. Y tried law in California?"

"No; the country was overrun with lawyers. Besides, aft all, you know, I was making a living in the mines."

"Come now," said John, with interest, "could you make fif dollars a week?"

"Not all the time, perhaps; during most of it, yes."

"Could you make forty dollars a week the year round?"

"I believe we averaged as well as that."

"Thunder! What did you come away for?"

"Why, John, I—I was rather weary of mining; it wasn't very congenial, you may suppose; and there are other things think of in the world besides making money, you know, John

"Oh! ah! yes," admitted John, doubtfully; "at least I us to think so. But youthful dreams are one thing and the bu ness of life is another. We're all business men here, Gifford.'

"I suppose so; and each thinks only of what will advance h own business," said Hugh, with some bitterness. "They a business men in Canaan, who only keep that eye open whi looks towards profit; and this place is only a bigger Canaan. was walking down School Street just now, and I saw a man a proaching whom my poor father's brain and industry made ric for he made others rich if he did not make himself so. W this man's instinct or some gossiping tongue had taught him t I had not been over successful, I suppose; at any rate his eye *profit* couldn't see me, and he crossed over and passed by on *other side*."

"Ah, you mean Scumble?"

"Yes."

"Well, he has got on immensely of late years. He's uncommonly smart, Scumble is. You're quite right, he's a first-rate business man."

Yes; even John Chester was infected by the atmosphere he breathed. He might have substantially the same nature still, but it was so crusted over by the oxidization of the prevailing gold-worship that but little of its old true metal could be seen below. Gifford sighed as he thought that even this one true friend, whose staunchness he had counted on, had become, if not alienated, at least somewhat cooled towards him. There are some places in the world whose absent ones are more wrong than those of any other spot beside; and Boston is not the least conspicuous of them. Hugh had not the least idea that he had committed any crime during his Pacific sojourn; but he was convinced that, had he done so, and the noise of it been bruited, the people he met could scarcely have regarded him with more coldness and suspicion. He could not make it out; at least he only partly saw the truth. He was not yet quite experienced enough to know that if his townsmen had been aware of the existence of that gold heap of his, they would have roared themselves hoarse with welcome—have strewn flowers in his path—have chanted his praise from the very house-tops—have converted his doleful visit into a gorgeous triumph. He guessed enough, however, to supply him with a plentiful stock of bitterness, and to rejoice when the old dome of the State House faded from his view, and he could shake the dust of Boston from his feet.

It was agreed that John should write to Gifford, to a certain address in New York, if anything occurred at Canaan which would be interesting to relate; Hugh being, as he professed, unsettled as to whither he should bend his steps, but intending to arrange that all letters should safely follow wherever he might determine to go. With this understanding our hero repaired at once to New York, and betook himself to the task of discovering Marian.

His means for performing this task were of the simplest; consisting, as they did, of nothing more than the name of Mr. Rivingstone's agent. To find him was only the work of an hour after arriving in the metropolis, but the information he could afford was of the most meagre description. Miss Rooke had been met by Mr. Rivingstone on her arrival from San Francisco; she had remained in town while he had gone South for a three months' *tour; in the mean time* his sister had joined Miss Rooke,

and the two had awaited his return. He came back in and the whole party had sailed directly afterwards for E Of their present address he knew nothing, and could onl to a banker in London. With this knowledge Hugh wa force content, and, indeed, any other would have been o use, since he was resolved to get it for himself, and at quarters; nor was he long in putting his resolution into for within a week he was again on shipboard, again bre old ocean's billows; but this time in what was for him tried direction, for he was leaving his native land behin and his prow was turned eastward.

CHAPTER IV.

"THE question is, Who can he be?"

"Yes, mamma, and echo answers, 'Who?'"

"He couldn't be, for example, an English nobleman guise?"

"Not he. No man born at once rich and titled, ev those premature lines—those souvenirs of anxiety in h The body may acquire ease, the bearing, grace, and no remain of what they supersede—but not the countenance ink used there is indelible, and never washes out."

"You conceive then that he is——"

"*Un nouveau riche?* Quite so; but he may be a gen for all that."

"A gentleman! I should think so, indeed. Clinton scarcely write as he did about a man who was not. And puzzle is, that he writes precisely as if he knew nothing Gifford's antecedents."

"My brother is certainly never too ready to take pe trust. An American, abroad, too! It's very odd."

"You would say now," pursued the elder lady, w doing something, with snowy fingers, to a maze of crims "that he could not be a retired trader?"

"Impossible, dear mamma. Consider the man's a manner of speaking. Besides—more crucial test—the *crest* emblazoned on his carriage."

"True, true. And the carriage itself—quite a mir

plainness. No; I think you're right, Edith. But if not a successful merchant, it's clear he's no politician."

"Heavens, no! Clinton would never have given letters to a politician; whatever his faults, my brother would never dream of introducing a politician into the family of the Parapets!"

"Unless sinning through ignorance, perhaps——"

"Ignorance! surely their odious names are familiar enough. To be sure, we don't read the detestable newspapers, their organs, but the men do; and I'm confident either papa or Clinton would know if Mr. Gifford had been compromised in politics."

They were absurdly alike—mother and daughter—with tall figures, delicate aquiline noses, brows exhibiting just a *soupcon* of the supercilious, irreproachable complexions, dainty hands and feet, and undeniably aristocratic bearings generally. There was not the difference which is legitimate between five-and-twenty and five-and-forty; not because the daughter looked old, but because the mother looked young—two things which by common consent are voted impossible in America, but which occasionally contrive to be true, notwithstanding. It is very odd, by the way, how often exceptions will insist on crossing one's path to give the lie to accepted theories. Perhaps when a man has known many a skinny Englishwoman, and many a stout American—many a Briton who didn't drink beer, and many a Yankee who didn't boast—many a Bull who was cosmopolite, and many a Jonathan who was not provincial—many a German who was airy and mercurial, and many a Frenchman who would not eat frogs; I say, when one can truly cite such an experience, he may be permitted, perhaps, to disregard the general rule, and, like an ingenious lawyer, to insist on urging a numerous family of exceptions.

At all events, these two ladies were of or among them. They were unimpeachably well dressed, and, beyond all cavil, they were well bred. They did not shriek like peacocks, nor load themselves with diamonds at their breakfast table. Their speech betrayed no nasal twang; they did not "conclude," "calculate," or "guess;" they did not "admire" things to eat, call their servants "helps," or commit any other kindred abomination. The worst that could be said of them was that, ignoring their own utility as shining lights—a grave remissness indeed in a community most of whose members are for ever groping after standards and seldom finding them—they would insist on getting perpetually under bushels, so that the world declared that light there was none.

"Politics *and the Parapets*," continued the younger lady,

philosophically, "are like oil and vinegar; they never min save at a great crisis, and only then on much persuasion. such occasion exists now, as brother Clinton well knows."

"There remain the professions," said Mrs. Parapet, followi the more particular thread of the discourse. "Our new acquai ance may be a lawyer, an officer, a physician, or even a cleri man."

"Each and all incompatible with his movements. A m whom nobody, except Clinton, knows, comes into a fashional square, buys a handsome house of brown stone, furnishes it exquisite taste; sets up his carriage, is introduced by us in our set, goes to two or three parties, makes the proper cal appears half a dozen times at the opera, and then when ever one expects him to settle quietly in his new home, and perha set about selecting its mistress, he starts off like a madman or express agent, and is heard of one week at Niagara, the next St Louis, the next at New Orleans, the fourth at Havana, t fifth is at home again, and on papa calling at the beginning the sixth he is told that Mr. Gifford left for Montreal the nig before. These are eccentricities hardly consistent with the pu suit of a profession. Besides, Clinton met him travelling qui in a similar way; he seems to have frisked through Europe ve much in the same odd fashion he adopts here."

"Perhaps," observed Mrs. Parapet, hunting vaguely about f a suggestion, "perhaps he is the agent for some great Europe company."

"No," replied her daughter, decisively, "there is not a tra of anything commercial about him."

"The secret emissary of some foreign government, perhaps again hazarded the mother, ingeniously.

"There *is* something reserved and thoughtful in his manne but then, you know, he said he had only been in Europe for year. Besides, he's too young for a post of that sort."

"An author, possibly."

"An author with a carriage in *this* country?" said Edith, scor fully. "Not in our generation, I fear. And who ever heard any scribbling Gifford? There has been none such since t Reviewer."

"Well, my love, we are simply reduced to consider him a w educated and rather clever young man, to whom somebody l been good enough to leave a fortune. We are on sure grou here, and if the foothold is narrow it is certain to be safe."

"Ah, mamma, but that's just it. Clinton wrote me that friend, although in general very uncommunicative about

former life, had yet told him that his family were poor—only able to educate him by making sacrifices—and that he had not a relative or connection on earth who would serve him to the extent of a dollar, or whose help he would not despise if it were offered."

"In that case, dear Edith, I confess myself completely at a loss, and our mysterious acquaintance may be the Wandering Jew for aught I can surmise to the contrary."

"He may have done something somewhere," said Miss Parapet, thoughtfully, "to get all this money; but your clever rascals always have something flashy—something you are called on to illustrate with notes of admiration—about them; and he has absolutely nothing of the kind."

"So that you give up the enigma, Edith, my love, with all your cleverness, and confess yourself nonplussed as well as mamma?"

It *was* rather hard to make Gifford out. Not but that there were plenty of gold-laden Californians in New York as well as he; but they were mostly of the tinker and tailor class, who made no secret of their wealth, or the mode of its acquisition; and whose origin and calibre it required no confidence on their part to explain. They were also well known to each other, so that, if any particular tongue were silent, all the rest wagged sufficiently to make its reticent master's affairs no mystery. As we have seen, Gifford was an exception to this rule. There was no 'longshoreman, cab-driver, jack-tar, tinker or tailor, faro-banker, or wholesale swindler among the begemmed and gorgeous crew at the Cosmopolitan Hotel, who could tell whence Gifford's resources were drawn, even if any of them might perhance have known his face. Even if that prince of bold operators, the redoubted Pangburn, himself had turned up, he could only have explained how Hugh had lost a small fortune—not how he had found a large one. Indeed there were none living excepting Ike and Lion, both of whom were equally unlikely to appear in Parapetian society, who could give the smallest light on the subject. Thus that *rara avis* anywhere, the spectacle of a man who, having come suddenly into the possession of money, has yet some distant notion of how to spend it, was not likely to be elucidated so far as the history of Gifford was concerned, unless he himself chose to tell his own story.

"He's certainly handsome," remarked Mrs. Parapet as a pennant to a knot in her silken mystery.

"I call him distinguished looking rather than handsome; scarcely tall enough to be a fine man, but with a great number of

good points. No man without decent blood in his veins has precisely those points—in America, or out of it."

"There are a great many eligible girls just out," proceeded the mamma; "he could hardly have come at a more promising season. Of course none of the old families could think of a man so utterly unknown. But there are plenty in the next grade—the ball and dinner-party set—who are all before him where to choose. There is Clara Vyse, the great counsellor's daughter——"

"Dear mamma, she's so dreadfully common! and she bridles and squeaks like a peacock!"

"There's Julia Cranstoun, with a nice fortune and——"

"The face of a cook, and the manners of a nursery governess."

"Isabel Pinckney, I'm sure, is a very good match."

"A scrawny creature like that, half deaf, and at least six-and-thirty!"

"And Emily Bishop has both beauty and money."

"An incorrigible Yankee, who snivels like Mawworm, and fills the room with an atmosphere of pork-and-beans and pumpkin pie!"

"My dear Edith!"

"I beg your pardon, mamma, I'm sure, for disparaging your favorites, but you really seem to forget that Mr. Gifford is not only a man of keen perception, but also one who is uncommonly fastidious, and the specimens you select are curiously obnoxious to criticism."

Mrs. Parapet raised her eyes for an instant, and then dropped them again upon her crimson silk; she had seen the faintest of flushes on her daughter's aristocratic cheek; rather an odd thing, she thought, for a young lady whose fashionable imperturbability was carried, in general, almost to excess.

"The old families are out of the question," she repeated, half interrogatively, by way of experiment.

"Distinctly!" answered Edith, with emphasis. "But there are some young women not altogether hideous, unpresentable, and *passees* among the new. And, since Mr. Gifford is in a manner consigned to us, we may fairly wish him success in the least objectionable category."

"*Chacun à son goût.* The taste of men and women in such matters I have commonly found to be at variance. Your own would be thought unimpeachable, my love, in every respect save that of female charms; and even in those, Mr. Gifford and your

elf may agree. Should he return in time for the Egremont Ball, the point may be fairly put to the test."

"We go to the Egremonts, then?"

"I think, upon the whole, yes. It doesn't involve visiting, you know, and is perfectly understood as not to be taken advantage of. To be sure they can never be of our set by any possibility, so the risk is but slight. Their balls are showy, fashionable, and amusing, if not of the best *ton;* and if one meets a rather promiscuous assemblage, 'tis only once a year, and you never know them again. Your papa thinks it well to patronize the Egremonts."

"To this extent—no more?"

"Precisely. And, as I observed, Mr. Gifford may, if he returns in time, give you the opportunity of comparing notes with him on the particular question at issue. The Egremonts always muster pretty girls in shoals."

"The daughters of Israel largely included."

"*Que voulez vous?* A man who has a people and a vocation cannot put both to the wall at his seasons of festivity. Everything considered, they are most inoffensive, and so long as they continue as unobtrusive as they have hitherto been, I for one will help them out once a year with all the pleasure imaginable."

This conversation took place in a very tasteful boudoir in a very roomy mansion in the most exclusive, although not the most modern, fashionable quarter of New York. The mansion was not built of pretentious brown strone, now so generally used to make showy facades, and too often facades only, for the houses of the new rich in that remarkable city, but of solid, sombre old gray granite, and dingy red bricks. It was not propped on either side by a companion precisely like itself, as from a sometimes not unreasonable precaution lest it should fall, but stood in its own grounds, which were large enough to contain a whole block of such parvenu fabrics, and was shaded by vast elms, which threw their protecting arms far above even its own lofty gables. This was the town-house of the Parapets, and had been such for many a year before any who now bore the name had seen the light. Here they came regularly at the last of October, and remained until the following first of June. The interval was passed at a still roomier and still older, and still more patrician-looking house on the Hudson, near Haverstraw; the exceptions to either sojourn being when any of the family were in Europe, or saw fit, at cautious periods, to show themselves for a few days at Newport or Saratoga.

Enough has been said in the preceding colloquy to describe at

least a part of Hugh Gifford's career during the first twelvemonth of his newly-gained riches. He had passed a year in Europe, had returned to his native country, had purchased and furnished a house in New York, and set up an establishment, with the apparent design of settling regularly in that metropolis; had no sooner made these arrangements than he had dashed off on a swift tour through the American States, had returned, and at the present time had once more left his new home and betaken himself to Canada.

We shall have occasion anon to go further than to merely trace the outline of these erratic movements, by filling in their explanatory incentives and hoped-for objects; but before doing so it may not be amiss to describe the origin of our hero's association with the polite society of the great island city, which will necessarily involve some further brief description of the family of the Parapets.

CHAPTER V.

THERE has always been a great deal of doubt in the outer, more especially in the European world, as to the existence in America of the family of the Parapets. Now it is one among the many objects of this veritable history to set that doubt entirely at rest. That the Parapets do positively exist I most unhesitatingly pledge myself; and beg leave further to record the conviction that the stress of events would very speedily have established the fact of their existence, even had my history failed to do so. Nevertheless, such personal testimony as I am able to afford will not, I trust, be regarded as supererogatory, since anything which throws light upon so important and so much mooted a point may be presumed to have its uses.

In flying back over the continent from the marvellous land of gold—and I may mention, *passim*, that I so flew very soon after Hugh Gifford became a rich man—just as the sun is constrained to gild first the highest peaks, I feel impelled to enlighten the reader by touching upon the Parapets—a simile which may or may not be deemed to make up in appositeness what it lacks in modesty, but which will be warmly appreciated by that family *themselves*, however it may miss endorsement from the remainder of mankind.

To begin, then, after the order indicated, it is necessary to il-
mine the highest pinnacle in the person of the head of the
ouse ; it is necessary to give some brief account of Mr. Dyce
'arapet. This gentlemen was—and, refusing to take note of
me, still apparently is—a comely, well-preserved, wholesome,
enevolent, and regular individual of sixty ; with smooth white
air, smooth white hands, a clear skin, a starchy manner, and a
ood digestion. There were a great number of Mr. Dyce Para-
ets before the present one, going back for many a year before
he Revolution ; and they were physically the pictures of their
iving representative, except it may be they were a trifle stouter
nd taller. But after going back for a few generations you would
nd other than physical differences between them. You would
nd that they did not in those days think it well to shrink into
heir shells like oysters to avoid the rough contact of the world
without ; did not think themselves in the exceptional position of
owing no duty whatever to their fellow beings in general, or to
heir countrymen in particular ; in a word, there was no doubt
n their time as to whether or no the Dyce Parapets really existed ;
nd this fact is suggestive of the most important divergence be-
tween the family of yesterday and the family of to-day.

The Mr. Parapet of to-day had never been in trade, had nev-
er been in any profession, had never been in the legislature,
ither local or national ; in brief, had never been in anything ex-
epting the bosom of his family, and such limited and highly
xclusive social circles as, with cautiously adapted radii, swept
within the probability of noise or publicity. These circles were
onstituted of people of similar aptitudes for doing nothing, and
ot being heard of ; and, collectively speaking, they were re-
narkably successful in carrying out their tastes. Hence, there
s the same apocryphal glamour thrown over them by society at
arge as enshrouds the Parapets ; and as they are not much
nore accessible to strangers than to their own country folk,
nany an European tourist, after thoroughly travelling over, and
ompletely understanding everything else in America in the space
f six months, has yet departed with an unhappy persuasion that
hese families were, like the Parapets, altogether mythical, and not
o be accepted by the intelligent observer as corporeal entities.
This was a general effect, highly pleasing and satisfactory to the
amilies ; and so far as some of the tourists themselves are con-
erned, I confess that its production strikes me as by no means
n unmixed evil, much as I may deprecate it in a general way.

In suggesting indolence as a prevalent characteristic of the
lass *whereof the Parapets* were a type, I only intend to convey

that they eschewed effort, as connected with the public se
or in the channel of regular pursuits or professions; but
were by no means indolent in respect of personal accomp
ments or the acquisition of knowldge. Mr. Dyce Parapet
self was a very well read as well as a very well bred man.
had been substantially grounded in his youth in classic and
lite letters, and the family had always preserved and augme
an uncommonly fine library, to the advantages of which he
far from insensible. He took pleasure at sixty in Homer an
dramatists, and made Latin verses not to be despised. He
with undeviating regularity all the best of the foreign revi
and the most scholarly books which money could bring from
teeming press of Europe. He was well versed in history
political economy, and nothing emanated from the great r
ern lights in either field that he did not straightway grapple
draw knowledge from it. But all these tastes and acquirem
were quite valueless to the community in which he lived.
Parapet had no more idea of the significancy lying in the p
ical fact that all bodies which receive light give light, than he
of making an *auto-da-fe* of himself for the general good of
community. If he cherished any particular theory touching
object of his existence, it resolved itself into a sort of nega
assumption that there was no niche, no particular sphere of
fulness, open to him or such as him in his country as it now
with which idea I have nothing to do, further than to re
that it was entertained, and furnished an excuse, if any th
was, for the aimless, drone-like, useless life which Mr. Par
and his compeers lived.

Mr. Parapet was very rich. When people have large esta
which for years have been rising in value, and on which t
pay next to no taxes, they are very apt to become so. He
always been prudent, like most of his predecessors; and
though by no means illiberal in his expenditure, and having
expensive family, his property had steadily increased until
was perhaps one of the richest landowners in the State.
for the untaxed protection afforded by that State he never dre
ed of making any return; and if his attention had been forc
directed to the subject, he would doubtless have urged that
contributions as were made to the public revenue, in the wa
customs duties on the articles consumed by his family, wer
adequate requital for the security conferred. And in justi
may be acknowledged, that Mrs. Parapet and Miss Parapet
unconscious patriots in the way of French millinery to an ex
that might partially justify the plea.

Clinton, the only son and heir of this august house, having passed his four years at Harvard University, had been sent, as was customary with all young Parapets, to make the tour of Europe, and incidentally it was supposed that he would extend the range of his intellectual vision, and give the rounding touches to his scholarship at a venerable seat of learning in Germany. It was at Göttingen in truth that Hugh Gifford met this young scion, about a twelvemonth after the strange fortune that brought our hero wealth. Americans, like Englishmen, often make friends of each other abroad, when hardly any thing short of physical torture would induce them to speak at home. Hugh was struck by the easy bearing and gentlemanly manners of his countryman, so different from many among whom his own youth had been passed, and took more pains than he was wont to give himself on such a score, to cultivate Clinton's society. Afterwards they made a trip to Paris, and saw much of the glittering capital in company. Three or four years' seniority, and more than those years implied a certain rough knowledge of the world, put Hugh in something of the position of a mentor, and he often found himself half unconsciously giving forth the same sort of schooling he himself had received from softer lips in the wilds of the West. These utterances chiefly took the form of speculation and advice as to future prospects.

"You have no fancy for the bar?" he asked, at an early stage of their acquaintance.

"None; or at least, what little I have is curbed by the knowledge that practice at it is quite out of the question."

"Of course it's very difficult to work up; I've found that out."

"I don't mean that. I could, of course, afford to wait. But there are other and stronger objections."

"You think it too dry?"

"Oh no; I could stand that. But what man who has a name he feels bound to respect can enter a profession where the chief prizes are accorded to such men as now hold them at New York? To be sure, there are people of high character and attainments in it there, no doubt as high as any elsewhere, but they are exceptions; the general tone is such that success doesn't imply the possession of qualities one would wish to have the reputation of; that's all."

"It is better at Boston."

"Oh, I dare say; everything's better at Boston; and yet you people who come away never want to get back to it!"

"That is for other reasons; in my case at least. But if the bar won't answer, I suppose you'll go into politics?"

"My dear fellow! what can you be thinking of? Go into Congress, or the Assembly, to sit with McSwyne; to deliberate with Gagger, O'Slasher, and Bowie; to pair off with an Irish grog-seller, or be put on committee with a lottery sharper! Why, the race of Parapets would rise in their graves and prorogue the house! No; no political life for me."

"But surely people of your name have sat in the national councils? And, granting the evils you imply, the leaven to rectify them must come from above, not from below."

"Oh yes, there have been Parapets in Congress, and in the cabinet too, for that matter. But look, I pray you, at the company they kept; look at the names, sixty, fifty, even five-and-twenty years ago, and note the difference As to the leaven, none is required. The people are satisfied, and if not they have full power to be so. They can do without the Parapets, the Parapets can do without them. *Voila tout!*"

"Ah, taxation is low now, and do what they may they cannot spur you into rebellion; but were a great war to come, you will find the necessity for being heard and represented, unless you propose to submit to spoliation. Have you ever thought of the army?"

"Ay, truly; but there's nobody to fight. You see, there's nothing on earth to do in America, but for those who have money to keep it, and for those who haven't to make it. And it's lucky that, seeing there are so many ways to make it, the latter class are saved the temptation to rob the former. As for the army, *cui bono?* You are sent into the swamps of Florida, or to the extremity of the western frontier, to catch fever and ague, and pick off the poor devils of red-skins. No great incentive in that, and yet it's all our officers can do."

"Not very inviting, I grant. Still there must surely be some fields of usefulness; perhaps you've thought of turning author?"

"I doubt my ability. But were it indisputable, I don't see how it could be put to much use. It is too unremittingly laborious, too open to the criticism of fools, too uncertain in its results; in a word, its toils and rewards are too disproportionate to offer attractions for me. I've too little of the sacred fire which makes men ignore the balance or despise it, and should always be measuring profit and loss."

"Well, then, after all, what *do* you mean to do? Since the bar and the forum are too ignoble, the field too inactive or in-

lorious, and the pen too unprofitable, if you will allow me to
k, what *are* you to do?"

"Do? Ah, well, what my grandfather and father have done
fore me, and succeeded so admirably in doing—Nothing. It
a pursuit we have learned to accept as a sort of political
cessity; we have been taught that in a successful republic,
om the inevitable nature of things, there is Nothing to Do for
e Parapets."

Now Gifford had been rather bitterly of opinion that there
as not much to be done by a poor gentleman in his country,
t that there should be no niche, not even an ornamental one,
r a rich gentleman, he felt bound to combat. So he set to
rk with something very like zeal to persuade the young aris-
crat that it was his duty to strive for the common weal, albeit
ch labors might not advance his own; and that those who
re placed by fortune above the necessity of toiling for bread,
re clearly bound to employ their powers for the benefit of
ose who were under it. He pointed out that in a new country,
ere the absence of shackling conventionalities and time-
nored formulas enabled new experiments to be safely made in
e science of human development, and the art of human hap-
ness, it was a noble privilege to assist and to guide such experi-
ents to their benevolent conclusions and fruition. No poor
an could devote himself to such humane pursuits with a pros-
ct of achieving any considerable results. But any of inde-
ndent means might surely do so, and thus gain the gratitude
his species, and the blessings of his own conscience. Thus
gued Hugh, with earnestness and no little eloquence.

But his disciple was too substantially grounded in what might
e termed the Parapetian Philosophy, to be more than tempo-
arily affected by such suggestions. The Parapets had served
heir country very faithfully, so long as there was any need, but
ow there really was none. The people had good schools, high
ages, cheap provisions, universal suffrage, and what could the
arapets give them more? Nothing whatever had the Parapets
ept to themselves except their money and their lands, which
hey really couldn't distribute unless they turned Socialists at
nce, which was not in their way. What could the masses—the
oundations—want that the Parapets had not resigned to them?
he press was theirs, the legislature was theirs, the pulpit was
heirs, the bar was theirs, even the arrangements on the lines of
ravel had been made exclusively theirs. The Parapets had
ven paid that regard to public opinion as to hide themselves
way from the public eye, that the public might not be offended

by the spectacle of greater wealth or refinement than the pub in a general sense, possessed. Clinton didn't really know w they could do more, unless it might be to commit suicide *masse*, and leave their property for public distribution, and th memory to public gratitude; in which case each would last ab the same time, so that it would be of no permanent service. a word, there was nothing to argue, nothing to fight, nothing teach, nothing to write, nothing from any possible point of vi for a Parapet—but to be a Parapet, and do nothing.

"And after all," remarked their youthful representati "what a pretty fellow you are for a mentor! Here have y been—by your own confession—flying about Europe like a l liard-ball for a whole year—first on one side, then on the oth —one week in Vienna, the next in Madrid; yesterday in Reg Street, to-day lounging in the Boulevard des Italiens, and t what? You haven't even the excuse of study, such as I have Göttingen; you're a time-killer, pure and simple, and you n proach me for wasting it!"

"Unjust," quoth Hugh, "although very natural. Time is n enemy of mine; at least I have not intentionally ill-used it It's not my fault that I have perforce either killed or waste it."

"Ah, you mean you have had an object?"

"Unquestionably."

"Which is a secret, of course?"

"For the moment only. I'll tell it you willingly when it i accomplished; that is," he added, with a heavy sigh, "if it ev *is* accomplished."

"Tut!" said young Parapet, carelessly, "everything in th life is sure to be accomplished if we but stick to it long enough

A strange sentiment from a Parapet—from the scion of family, no member of which, within the memory of man, h had any aim or object to accomplish whatever: yet it did n strike Hugh as incongruous. There are men who, without ev doing anything at all, give you the idea that they could do ever thing in the world if they liked; and the Parapets were alwa of the class.

Neither was the lack of tenacity a weakness in Giffor character. He had blood in his veins which led him to an stinctive conviction that what he willed to do, he had streng to compass. It was not through want of resolution, and assure not through want of industry, that for so many months he h failed in the chief thing, to effect which he had visited Euro Truly surprising is it how enterprises will miscarry from wl

are apparently the simplest causes. Nothing, for example, appears easier in these days of newspapers and telegrams than to find any particular person whom you know to be travelling openly and freely about the Continent. It would seem that with a little trouble—a few inquiries, two or three lines in the *Times* perhaps—you can discover the object of your search. Yet I have known devices and experiments to be exhausted, to which these are as nothing, and they have absolutely and unaccountably failed.

Hugh could not exactly advertise Marian in the *Times*, but there was scarcely any other conceivable expedient to which he did not resort, and which did not ignominiously fail, during his year in Europe. The London banker he had easily found directly after his arrival; but he could furnish no more in the way of details than could Mr. Rivingstone's agent at New York. The party were on the Continent, he said; they had circular notes; he did not know when they would return; would, with pleasure, take charge of any letters, but had no address to which he could forward them, and really did not know when they might be expected to reach the hands for which they were intended.

With this scanty intelligence Hugh left England at once, reserving for the future his intended tour through the country which from childhood had more deeply interested him than any other. But in vain had he visited, in rapid succession, the chief cities of France, Italy, Germany, and Spain; no trace could be discovered of the Rivingstones or of Marian.

"Did you ever hear of Mahomet and the mountain?" queried Clinton, as they sat smoking one placid May evening in his apartment in the Rue de Rivoli. The dusk was just coming on, and hazier and hazier grew the distant view of the Arc de Triomphe. Whatever Gifford was thinking of—whether of his lost love or the Barrière de l'Etoile—it is certain the question had to be repeated before it was understood and answered.

"Well, and what then?"

"Only you seem to have been scampering about trying to get at something you have never reached; and it struck me that if you remained stationary—in one place—the something might come to you."

"Ah!"

"Of course it requires more patience and all that. But then it saves a deal of trouble."

"Yes."

"Suppose now you were to settle youself down here in this

very hotel. Sooner or later all the world comes to Paris Everyone who comes to Paris passes through the Rue de Rivoli Sit at this same window with an opera glass, therefore, and soone or later the mountain will come to you. Q. E. D."

"Clearly demonstrated, certainly."

"My dear fellow, it's infallible. What you have done hitherto has been, notwithstanding your disclaimer, sheer waste of time I'll wager that in a quarter of the space from this coigne of vantage you'll succeed."

"At all events it is worth the trial," half mused Gifford.

"Worth the trial! To be sure it is; and as I never invented anything before in my life, I'm anxious to see this put to the test You'll stay here then?"

Hugh reflected. He must, at all events, remain abroad for a year. It was quite necessary to do so, for in America he would constantly incur the risk of a miscarriage in his plan for concealing the change in his fortunes from Virginia; that is, unless he were to conceal himself somewhere and adopt the expedient of an incognito, neither of which he desired to do. On his return he proposed to take the position which his wealth might allow him to hold, and to carry out projects dim and shadowy as yet in detail, but not the less resolved upon in their general outline. He might as well remain at Paris for a time as elsewhere.

"I will," he replied at length, "at least for the present, or until I see good reason for flight. And although I've great doubts of the success of your scheme, yet should it turn out luckily, you shall not be begrudged the fullest credit."

There followed a week of Parisian gayety; not, it may be said, of dissoluteness, for it was a marked bond of sympathy between them that neither of the young men was easily fascinated by the more vulgar pleasures. That your friend is Diogenes may be no great attraction; but it is often the reverse of one if he be an Alcibiades. *Cada oveja con su parega*, saith the old Spanish proverb, and the birds of a feather usually flock together in Paris as freely as anywhere else, to say the least.

One morning there was a great deal of trumpeting and trampling of hoofs in the great street below, and Hugh looking forth saw what appeared to be a *cortege* of Chasseurs. What they escorted had preceded the detachment now in view, which was evidently bringing up the rear. Behind them again was a closely packed crowd of vehicles, which had been impeded by the procession, and so accumulated together.

Toward these carriages, idly following Clinton's advice, our

hero directed his opera glass. He looked long and earnestly, and although the instrument hid his eyes, his companion, lolling in an arm-chair close by, had no difficulty in seeing a great change come over the expression of Hugh's face.

"By Jove!" cried Mr. Parapet, "the mountain has come to Mahomet!"

It had not. But if such a physical phenomenon had presented in good earnest—certainly if he had seen what the metaphor was intended to illustrate—Hugh's face would not have expressed more interest and surprise; for he saw in the showiest cabriolet which adorned the gaudy throng, with a countenance fraught with cunning, and flushed with gratified vanity, the prosperous owner of the factory at Persepolis and the variety store of Canaan; while by his side, radiant in the delicate frippery of a French bonnet, gorgeous in the crumpling rotundities of a wonderful *moire antique*, sat the golden-haired idol of Hugh Gifford's youthful imagination—Virginia Chester.

CHAPTER VI.

Those most deeply skilled in the mysteries of the human intelligence, tell us that actions are rarely undertaken at the stimulus of a single motive; that there are commonly one or more besides the ostensible one, which help to strengthen the arm and buttress the resolution. True it is, that if we carefully examine our experience, whether in the colossal affairs of national, or the petty ones of individual life, we find an almost invariable diversity of opinion existing among mankind as to the incentives which have dictated actions; an evidence which is reasonably conclusive in establishing that those incentives have been of a mixed and complicated character.

Without pausing to do more than suggest a theory so open to common investigation, I may say that Hugh Gifford's course generally illustrated its inference. He came to Europe at the instigation of more motives than one, and he left it for at least as many. A few days before seeing Virginia, as narrated in the last chapter, he had written to Mr. Rivingstone's banker to ask if he could yet afford any information as to the whereabouts of that gentleman. This same evening there came two letters. The first, from the banker, was the briefest, and to the effect that Mr.

Rivingstone and party had sailed for New York three weeks b fore. The second was from John Chester, having been fc warded from Hugh's address at the same city, and contained account of the nuptials of his sister with Mr. Alphonso Gayco "I feel sure," wrote John, after a blunt statement of the lea ing facts he had to communicate, "that your regard for Virgi is such, as not to allow a natural pain at this event to preve your rejoicing at her prospects of a comfortable and assur future. G. has very handsomely cleared the mortgage on fathe farm, so that the old gentleman can now go on swimming The house has been repainted from top to bottom, and the n one for the married pair is quite the envy of Canaan. The gr cery business is really a very good one, and G. is a remarkably sm man. He is much respected in Boston, where he often comes make purchases. I suppose you have about given up the idea ever settling here; and people *do* get rather set and differe when they stay away long. Perhaps if you came back, and was *perfectly understood* you returned with the intention of stayi *for good*, many who are a little prejudiced might be induced modify. I am doing well, and have bought a likely piece woodland at Canaan Centre for twenty-seven dollars, sixty-tv and a half cents ($27 62½) an acre, being sure to rise. Tl heavy men at the bar seem disposed to give me a chance, bein as they say, wide-awake, and always on hand. Virginia and h husband take a bridal tour for a month or two in Europe. write as I promised, and suppose that this is what you meant n to advise you of when you asked me to do so, and would be gl if it were of a more agreeable character to yourself. I can't he thinking, if you had stayed in Boston, things would have be different. Some of our old friends at Cambridge inquire abo you occasionally; but they clearly think it unfortunate that yc should have stayed away so long, unless it was to come bac under different circumstances, &c., &c. Wishing you all th prosperity that can be had out of Boston, I am yours, &c JOHN CHESTER."

We have now seen that Hugh had reasons enough to tal him back to America, if not to Boston. Whether he had b haved well or ill in essaying his experiment with Virginia, he h essayed it; and it would be idle to deny that the result w gratifying to him. Not all gratification truly; for there are n many more men than women in the world who are pleased know that, whatever the circumstances, another has been pref red to themselves. But this trifling drawback was as nothing

the great swell of joy with which he anticipated the possibility of a union with Marian.

Love for, nay, almost worship of Marian, had grown to be the strongest passion Gifford had ever experienced. It was a passion which the lapse of time, the obstacles of circumstances, the accidents which prevented their meeting, only made the stronger. There are plenty of people whom such things will cool and deter, for all the dreams of poets and the theories of rhapsodists; probably the majority; but Gifford was not among them. If Virginia, believing him poor, had not wavered in her constancy—had still adhered to her engagement—I think Hugh would have married her, everything to the contrary notwithstanding; but he was now prepared to follow Marian to the ends of the earth, and if he could, to win her there.

So, with letters to the Parapets, which Clinton insisted on his taking, a year of European experience, and a heart full of hopes, doubts, and divers jostling schemes of ambition, back came Hugh from the Old World to the New; where, in the first weeks of his arrival, he disported himself as has already been described. But, in a certain respect, he was no more fortunate on one side the ocean than on the other, for he could not find Marian.

His purchase of a house in the great city was prompted by a mingling of two purposes. If he was to be useful in any manner to his country, he first must become a resident of it. A local habitation was an indispensable prerequisite to a name. But he loved also to think he was making a home which might become Marian's; perhaps as strong a motive as the patriotic one. Finally, Mr. Parapet, Sen., a shrewd judge in such matters, had warmly recommended him to buy the property, if only as an investment, upon the very sensible ground that he was quite sure to double his money in from five to seven years by its sale, should he determine not to retain it as a permanent residence.

Mr. Parapet introduced him, with much circumspection and pomp, to several elderly gentleman, all starchy, well bred, and in a high state of preservation, and all bearing names conveying that general suggestion of representing apocryphal families which his own did. And these gentlemen, after successively and regularly mistaking Hugh for an Englishman, treated him with great courtesy, invited him to dinner, and introduced him to their various unexceptional wives and highly-accomplished daughters. The young men were, generally speaking, either travelling like Clinton Parapet, studying at some university, or otherwise absent from the family hearth. There was nothing for them to do there, no interest for them in local or national politics, no temptation to

professional exertion of any kind, too much money to make labor of any sort obligatory; so for the most part they followed the Parapetian plan and did nothing; preferring as a rule to do it somewhere else, however, than under the paternal roof.

It was certainly a great advantage to Hugh Gifford to be launched, in a social sense, by the Parapets. Their endorsement was highly valuable, for the reason that although they had little in common with the classes who did Anything, yet the latter were accustomed to accept their imprint with the greatest reverence, and to regard their judgments as without appeal. With such an endorsement, the neophyte could wander at will through all the various chambers and halls of the edifice, descending until he arrived at the very foundations; and although the lower he went, the less the occupants knew of the Parapets, and the more dim and shadowy they appeared, there were no strata where—notwithstanding some incredulity, and here and there a weak attempt at ridicule—they were not looked up to, and their altitude acknowledged with more or less of awe. The worst of it was, so far as social improvement is concerned—so far as they might have been valuable as standards in that respect if not in any other—that the Parapets held themselves so high that they could only be clearly seen by those upon their own level, and so enveloped themselves in exclusive clouds that they became almost as useless socially as they were politically.

In this exalted atmosphere, Hugh saw and heard a great deal that was, without doubt, vastly interesting and edifying. He heard clever talk about books, pictures, statues; about philosophy, history, and natural science; appreciative discussions of new inventions, of achievements in architecture and engineering; of the progress that was making in the useful arts of shipbuilding, telegraphing, meteorology; of jurisprudence, and the modern theories in trade and political economy; and, finally, of the public affairs of nearly every country in the world—excepting his own.

Our hero was not so minutely versed in the workings of the system under which he had been born and bred as not to be surprised at the prevalence of this omission. He thought it curious if by chance he made a remark about affairs at Washington, that it should be received either in silence or with something like well-bred contempt. He could not perceive why the domestic politics of Cochin China or Timbuctoo should be so interesting and appropriate as subjects for conversation, while those of the United States were clearly, and, to say the least, *mauvais ton*. It was truly remarkable, that, in so great and growing a community

the wealthiest citizens who had most leisure to serve it, and the best educated who had most ability, should, voluntarily or otherwise, not only take no part in its concerns, but positively avoid their discussion.

Happily it was Gifford's privilege to fall in with a gentleman who was both able and willing to give him some enlightenment. Indeed, it would have been hard to find any one more competent to instruct on cognate subjects than Mr. Eldon Clyde; and although that gentleman was too polite to refer to them in Parapetian circles, he hesitated not in more mundane spheres to impart the light that was in him.

"Tell me," said this authority, on hearing a statement of Hugh's difficulty, "why do you send to the bank, when they are due, to draw your dividends?"

Hugh did not think the question was put to elecit a reply, and was silent.

"Why," pursued Mr. Clyde, "when the bell sounds, do you go to get your dinner? Why do you put on thin clothes when it is hot or thick ones when it is cold? Why, when your strong box is empty, do you leave it unguarded? and when it is full, fasten it with locks and bolts? Why do you refuse to cross the street to get something you don't value, while you go miles for something you do?"

"Because," responded Gifford seeing that the truisms halted for a general reply, "I suppose it is to my interest to do so."

"Precisely," said Mr. Clyde; "and when it is to the interest of these people to busy themselves with national affairs they'll do it, and not until then."

"But patriotism——"

"A dream. So far as public service is concerned in ordinary times, 'the baseless fabric of a vision.' You don't get the best goods in a state without paying the best price for them, and why should you get the best talents?"

"Members of the English Parliament are unpaid, and so are not our Congressmen."

"Ah, but note the distinction. The one is elevated by the suffrage of the most, the other by that of the least, cultivated portion of the community—a difference which is all in all in making the seats covetable to the members of either—and the event in both cases demonstrates the truth of the theory. The Parapets don't care a straw for mileage, but there is nothing in the shape of dignity or association which are given with it which they *do* care for."

"But the inference is that our system is so framed as absolutely

to dissuade the most capable from serving under it; to deter t men who could do the country most good from aiding it at al

"There is no escape from such an inference, for it is an u deniably true one. I don't think the men in question free fr blame; they should bestir themselves more in despite of obs cles, or rather of non-incentives, and so they probably would case of any great need—just because the need would create t incentives. But men are men; and the country being, on t whole, so prosperous, the defects in machinery pass unheed not because they don't exist, but because there is no strain those particular parts. The principle, nevertheless, which cludes a class, however it may be in a minority, and puts power in the hands of another, however it may be in a majori would belie history if it did not come to grief some time."

"The class could make itself felt if it liked."

"By doing what is contrary to human nature—giving eve thing, and taking nothing. Look, on the other hand, at the offices in our country which are held for life or good behavi in them the nation is invariably well served."

"Time, perhaps, may work changes for the better."

"Oh, the bulk of the nation is well satisfied, and well it m be. As to change, there will be none in effects until they a in causes. So long as taxes are so low, and the suffrage so tended, what are termed the masses will rule, and the educa and refined will be unrepresented."

"And revenge themselves by indifference?"

"As you see. The matter lies in a nutshell."

Mr. Eldon Clyde would never have expressed himself as now did on the house-tops, and yet the public very often hea from him. He controlled an influential newspaper, and was ge erally reputed to be one of the few men of signal talent and i tellectual grasp who interested themselves in politics. When wrote a leader, or a letter, it was extensively copied and quote and usually carried weight. But neither letter nor leader ev contained such sentiments as those he expressed to Hugh Giffo They were always skilfully constructed, with a keen apprec tion of the calibre of the intelligences they were intended affect. No ammunition was thrown away which would fall sh of its mark, or drop from it idly without being felt, seen, heeded. Mr. Clyde understood thoroughly the adaptation of me to ends, and useless force was as abhorrent to his taste as ac mulated adjectives and superfluous capitals to a purist in dicti He had, however, a very unaffected love of candor and strai forwardness, when they could be employed without impairing

political influence, and scrupled not to express his honest convictions on select occasions. It was a maxim with him that many things might rightfully be done which would make political relations more symmetrical, but which it was not expedient to attempt, lest the advantages already secured and enjoyed might be hazarded thereby. Thus there was an apparent inconsistency between his public and private professions which his enemies were ever swift to stigmatize, but which did not prevent his wielding a power which was often greatest when, to the common eye, its source was unseen. Perhaps the chief secret of his strength, so far as it was not immediately imputable to his natural powers, lay in the fact that such great numbers owed to Mr. Clyde their political advancement. He was curiously happy in reversing, for his own purposes, the adage which makes gratitude the reward of favors to come. At least he made those which were past pay a very fair and regular rate of interest.

"I believe," said Gifford, as he regarded with curiosity a man of whose political exploits he had heard so much, "I believe, Mr. Clyde, that you have never held office?"

"I! Good heavens! No. Do I look like an office holder?"

Hugh was obliged to confess that, so far as his individual experience was concerned, he did not. Circumstances had lately, and to his misfortune, taken Hugh into that Milesian close borough on a large scale called the common council of the city of New York, and he certainly remembered nobody there who looked a bit like Mr. Clyde.

"If I had ever accepted office for myself," continued Mr. Clyde, graciously receiving the acknowledgment, "I should not now be in the same position to command it for others."

"That seems to me," observed Hugh, smiling, "to be a disinterestedness rather at variance with your previous explanations."

"And, as I don't value office a straw," Mr. Clyde went on quietly, "while others value it very much, I make no sacrifice in escaping responsibilities. And now let me ask *you* a question; have you seen Doke?"

"Doke? No. Who is he, pray?"

"Ah, you'll soon see him, no doubt. I thought he would have called before now. But then you've been absent a good deal since you settled in your new house."

"Yes," answered Hugh, coloring, "business has taken me to the south and west; but I shall stay in town now for the present."

"Then you'll see him, without question, in good time. You'l be at the Egremont Ball?"

"Oh, yes. I promised Mrs. Parapet."

"A very good thing to do. Not quite so select, you know, as some of our ultra-fastidious ones would have it, but you'll find a great deal to amuse."

"I'm anxious to see some of the celebrities of the day."

"To be sure. The Parapet circle is quite the loftiest, of course, but a trifle too monotonous, perhaps, to revolve in perpetually. Nothing like variety. I believe in social rotations as I do in official ones."

"Variety, I am told, is quite the feature of the Egremonts."

"And so it is. Not indiscriminate, you know. It wouldn't be fair to say so; but they're safe to give you a very tolerable idea of our social fabric. You'll find it quite diversified enough, considering it's a democratic one. Light and shade, color and ornamentation, enough to please Mr. Ruskin. There's sufficient variety in all conscience, before you get up to the Parapets."

"And yet, as you say, the edifice is a democratic one."

"Politically, my dear sir, but not socially; a distinction with a difference, which no one can better expound than your friend Mrs. Parapet."

CHAPTER VII.

Crush, glitter, and confusion. A paradise of silks and laces and flowers, from which glance dazzling eyes and snowy shoulders and dainty feet. A paradise of light and movement, melodious with Verdi and oderous with Lubin. A paradise of beauty, with houris innumerable floating about in every bewitching phase of coloring and contour that dreams present to us or fancy paints. Mrs. Parapet spoke most truly when she said the Egremonts always had shoals of pretty girls. And, albeit the expression which implied multitude might also have conveyed a tincture of contempt, I for one am religiously of opinion that shoals of pretty girls are signally conducive to the *eclat* and success of a ball. To look lovely and dance well, are virtues which no vigor of intellect, no loftiness of soul, can compensate in those fleeting hours when pretty girls at once play havoc with one sex and revenge themselves on the other for that

current sneer of theirs, that beauty must ever and perforce be brainless.

But the Egremonts had something besides pretty girls to boast of, they had also noble rooms to show them off in; lofty saloons, where, eschewing old-fashioned chandeliers, light came from above, and, the jets concealed by cornices, a softened refulgence spared the eyes without impairing the effect of ladies' toilets; saloons in long suites of almost regal splendor, and ending in a theatre large enough to hold all the assembled guests; they had pictures and statues of sterling merit, which relieved the delicate neutral tints of the walls; and a spacious conservatory, which afforded the charm of masses of green shade and the perfume of natural flowers to refresh senses which the outer radiance and artificial odors might have palled.

Then the Egremonts had an orchestra probably as good of its kind as could be found in the world—an orchestra which dealt forth dance music in the crispest and daintiest of styles, and supplied operatic *entr'actes* with a feeling and completeness which quickened imagination and stimulated flirtation quite as much as was desirable. Moreover, in good time, viands were forthcoming, which no French or any other *cuisine* could be expected to surpass; while the wines were such that more fastidious critics than the majority of guests were likely to be would have been more than content with them.

As Mr. Clyde had prognosticated, there were a great many celebrities there. People noted for gold were perhaps the shining lights, but there were others whose names were famous in connection with law, with big contracts, with houses and ships, with high offices of state, with long railways, and fat insurance companies; nay, there were one or two who had made good books and pictures, and, not over agreeably to the sensitive Parapetian taste, there were a good many politicians. Politics, however, were as essential as mother's milk had been to the head of the house of Egremont; and, to do him justice, he was liberal enough to invite opponents as well as friends. He courts yonder great lawyer, who thinks Slavery must be right, because he has had some heavy slaveholding clients, and has read up in their interest, no more than he does Blurt, the great sewing-machine man, who thinks Slavery must be wrong, because a black man he once had in his employ understood the binomial theorem.

The truth is, the master of the house, without being a giant in intellect, has an essentially kind and liberal nature. Even poor poets find places at his board—a phenomenon which, it must be owned, is rarer at the tables of the rich in republics than

in monarchies. There is Prodder, for instance; you don't kn Prodder? He writes little articles and versicles for what called "literary weeklies," which start into existence with great blaze of trumpets, and an imposing roll-call—Prodde always figuring in large caps—and die in a few weeks aft without even the poor reverence of a valedictory dead mar for the burial of the last number. Of course it isn't Prodde fault that the New Yorkers have no taste for any sort of week unless in the style of a feeble cross between *Reynolds's Miscella* and the *Sporting Life*. And yet, perhaps, if he had saved a lit vitality—whatever else he may have exhausted it upon—so th his effusions, always respectable in other respects, had not be so desperately dry, provincial, and prejudiced, something like sounder taste might have grown up ere this and waxed stro in the land. However, let us not blame Prodder too severe He is the product of his latitude and his age; and if his latitu and his age require as intellectual pabulum nothing better th vulgar newspapers, emasculated poemlets, and political sermo let them have their meat and go their way. There are wo men than Prodder here, for all his blunder in thinking the g have made him poetical.

Crash goes the orchestra, and back and forth swings the mot throng. Through a gorgeous fringe of it comes Hugh Giffo who has returned, as he promised, in season for the famous b He makes his way through a brilliant knot of officers—wh he notices particularly, as recognizing in several the shopm who attended to his wants when making sundry small purchas at various times, in Broadway. They are *point-de-vice* now, h ever, and think no more of shop than Gifford himself thinks Armstrong's Bar. Not so much, perhaps; for his thoughts wander thither as he gazed on the many lovely women bef him, and remembered how often on starlight nights he l wandered by the river side there with one more beautiful th the loveliest, all unaided as was the gem by the fashion and c liness of its setting. Hugh ensconced himself behind so shrubbery, and looked for a while on the joyous scene silence.

"Not sad and solitary on a night like this, surely?" crie voice, as Mr. Clyde stepped into the conservatory by his side

"Oh, dear, no. Only waiting. It is a gala day with Parapets; Clinton has returned, quite unexpectedly, by Scotia, and Madame *mere* is in the best of spirits. I prom to meet the party here at ten."

"And it only lacks five minutes. Good evening, Gene

you're looking younger than ever, I protest; and how is trade now?"

"Slack, sir, slack; and will be until the spring season. We're always dull, you know, after the river closes," replied a dignified man with white hair and epaulets. The general was a boot and shoe dealer down town. They have found different generals of late years.

"Now, Mr. Clyde," cried a handsome middle-aged woman in white brocade, sweeping by on the arm of an Italian singer, "are you going to oppose Mr. Mellish for the Senate this spring? I told him I'd get it from your own lips, and I will."

"Ah, my dear madam, so much may happen between now and spring. Why, you can't even tell what may then be the fashion in bonnets; how then can you expect me to tell what may be the mode for senators?"

"But only just listen. Pray forgive me an instant, Signor Bragoli. That cold-blooded fish, Bayman, says you're dead set against him; and that you declared you'd send him out of Albany ten thousand behind!"

"Indeed, I never made such a boast. Believe me, if I intended such a thing I should never trumpet it beforehand. And as to Mr. Bayman——"

"I know; the little sallow wretch thinks only of himself. I may tell Mr. Mellish you won't oppose him then?"

"Tell him I never thought of such a thing."

"He'll be so grateful, for if you don't nobody else can." And she swept on, leaving a heavy flavor of verbena mingled with the geraniums and tea roses of the conservatory.

"Women are such odd creatures," said Mr. Clyde, softly, "especially when they turn politicians. She'll tell Bayman the same thing of me before the night's over, and wring from him an assurance which will be equally valuable with my own. And yet Mrs. Mellish fancies herself, and indeed has the reputation, of being a very female Machiavel. Have you danced?"

"I promised to stand up first with Miss Parapet."

"Oh, you could scarcely do so with a more lovely partner."

"Miss Parapet is certainly very handsome. There are many lovely girls here, but none I have seen are more beautiful than she is."

"Have you seen Miss Dimity?"

"No. Who is she?"

"Daughter to the great dry goods firm. A tall girl—the finest blonde in the room. Great rush for her since the new

store has been built up town. But they say nothing in trade will do for her now."

"What! Do such people despise the ladder whereby they have mounted to fortune?"

"Certainly. Kick it over when they get to the top rung, and pretend they never mounted it at all."

"But in a democratic community——"

"My dear sir, if there were less political equality among us there would be more social equality. As it is, every one is dying to get among the Parapets, and to achieve the reputation of doing nothing."

And, talking of their majesties, in came the Parapets at this moment, appropriately heralded by a grand march. They always came late to affairs of this sort, and went early. The mystery of their existence would be rudely dispelled were they to make themselves common to the eyes of the vulgar. Sailing augustly through the clouds of laces and satins, decked out with bouquets and flashing gems, the party made its way to the hostess, who was duly crushed by the honor done her; and then to a corner where Mrs. Parapet mounted a sort of throne, where she received the homage of a select few who were permitted to approach it. Clinton, more condescending as becoming the younger scion of royalty, presently mingled with the rabble, and established a violent flirtation with Miss Dimity. That young lady, alive to the opportunity for social advancement, hazarded something at a favorable moment about his mother and sister; but Clinton, quite free from snobbery as he was, would no more have dared to present her than he would have dared to present Mr. M'Fenian. There was a despotism which not even the audacity of youth, the impulse of good nature, and the fresh hold on a mother's heart gained by the unexpected return from abroad, could venture to offend.

Meanwhile, Hugh was waltzing away in fine style with Edith Parapet, and all was going merry as a marriage-bell.

More arrivals, more silks and diamonds, more waltzes of Strauss, Lanner, and Labitzky, and more pretty women! Just after midnight enter the Mayor and his family. His honor is reputed to have committed every sin in the decalogue, and, unmindful of the old-time axiom, which attributes honor to thieves who deal with each other, he is said to be a double-edged glaive, cutting both friend and foe. There are people before, behind, on every hand, who have suffered from his peculations, and the aggregate public worst of all. Yet he is received, adulated, smiled upon. Oh yes, my dear sir, for you must know he is a

mazingly *smart man*, and weareth a robe in his civic chair which overs as much as charity. One thing in fairness let us admit—e gets no recognition from the Parapets. He may wriggle and nesse as he likes; and madam mayoress may exhaust her magzine of feminine intrigues and devices, but into that charmed rcle they get no entrance.

"What a fearfully mixed assemblage!" murmurs Mrs. Parat, as, with brows and eye-glass raised, she glances hastily at e new arrivals.

"Ah, my dear madam," answers the gentleman at her elbow, what can you expect when there are scarcely any occupations ve trading and cheating, any studies save of cash-books and lgers, any aspirations save who shall be richest! The elements which constitute a high-minded, chivalrous, and cultivated ciety, are wanting in a purely commercial community, and so ust they ever be."

The speaker is Mr. Cabot, a fossil beau of the past generation. e saw Washington and Hamilton when a youth, and sat at ble with Carroll of Carrollton. No wonder he dislikes the peoe of to-day.

"Clinton is dancing too much with that yellow-haired girl. don't know her, so of course she's one of the new people's ughters."

"Any one could detect that by comparing her with Miss Parat," said the old gentleman, with his courtly bow. "There are ores of handsome young women now-a-days to a single really legant one."

What a delicious polka! and away goes Clinton Parapet round the great saloon for the twentieth time with his new harmer, and until she is quite exhausted, and must sink upon a *fauteuil* in a cooler room.

"I say, Gifford," says Clinton, "it's deuced hot! Come, Pinckey, come with us. You get no supper until half-past one, you now. Gifford and I are going to have a bottle of champagne."

"May I not bring you an ice?" asks Gifford of Edith Parapet.

"Thanks, yes; only don't remain; but pray go with Clinton, r I'm sure you must feel the heat."

"It won't be uncomfortable long," lisped Wirt Pinckney; Egremont has a new ventilating apparatus, and can fix the merry exactly where he likes without making a draught."

"How delightful! Thank you, Mr. Gifford. Yes, I like illa; and now, do go, you three, and get your champagne."

"I shan't stay long," exclaims Clinton, running back hurried-

ly to his charmer. "Remember, Miss Dimity, the schottisch please, the fourth dance from this."

"Oh, I shall be sure to recollect," responded the young lad with a smile all the more fascinating for being a little languid.

"Don't dance with that girl any more," whispers Edith, as her brother passes her again. "Mamma isn't pleased, and pa has just come in from the club with Mr. Stapleton."

"I *must* keep my engagement, whatever I do."

"Well, but after?"

"After will be supper time."

"I've just met an old friend," remarks Mr. Clyde to Gifford as the young men returned from their champagne, "and if you like I'll introduce you to a ward of his, a young lady who, to my poor bachelor taste, is the most bewitching at the ball. Only you mustn't be bewitched, for she's engaged. Will you come?"

"With much pleasure. Just permit me to make a word of apology to Miss Parapet."

Which done, on they go through the crowded rooms, now denser than ever with laces, and silks, and dazzling eyes, and complexions radiant with exercise and excitement; and, as they go, the orchestra, by way of respite from the long continued dance-music, strikes up some tender souvenir of Bellini's. Through the saloons, under arches, across corridors, to the conservatory, where Clyde first accosted him, and Gifford finds himself presented to a tall, suave-looking man, with white cravat and frosty locks. He misses the name, but hears himself introduced as "My young friend, Mr. Gifford." Then some one in a delicate lemon-colored silk, with rose-buds in her hair, glides forward from among the geraniums, while Mr. Clyde concludes the ceremony with:

"And allow me to present—Mr. Gifford—Miss Rooke."

CHAPTER VIII.

GODWIN thought a man was never in such danger of missing the applause of the world as when he took the greatest possible pains to deserve it. The cynicism is gloomy enough, and its inference, if generally accepted, would surely be fatal to honest endeavor. Perhaps, like many wise saws, its application should be limited to philosophers; when it would become easy and a

so disheartening to recognize its truth. The author of "Political Justice" had doubtless some reason to complain of a world which thought it had many to complain of him; but the judgments of author and public are so often at variance respecting the comparative merit of works as to make it strange that a philosopher should overlook the root of the discrepancy. Now, Hugh Gifford, being neither author nor philosopher, was duly astonished that after taking the utmost possible pains to find Marian, so that he really felt he deserved to have found her, she should suddenly rise before his eyes unsought and unexpected. But they were in very decorous and very observant society now, so that they could not rush into each other's arms had they been so minded. Neither could Marian faint, nor Hugh indulge in any corresponding sign of emotion, such as they would have been free to in the woods or prairies. The meeting, so far as words went, was most prosaic; for Hugh, as he bowed low over Marian's outstretched hand, merely mumbled something inarticulate, while Marian, who was never inarticulate, said simply in the old sweet contralto:

"I am very glad to see you."

"You have, then, met before?" said Mr. Clyde, in some surprise.

"Oh, yes," answered Marian steadily, "we are very old friends. But it is some time since we have seen each other."

"I am fortunate in bringing you together. And since you have both been in Europe at the same time without meeting, you will be grateful that the *contretemps* is not repeated in America."

"You have been in Europe?" asked Marian with interest. "You?"

"Why not?" said Hugh, laughing. "You always told me I was to go, you know."

"But that was to be after you had made your fortune."

"Ah, in this great gossiping city one is, after all, so obscure. You have not heard, of course?"

"Heard what?"

"Why, Miss Rooke"—he did not call her Marian now, although the two elder gentlemen had strolled away in earnest conversation, and were fairly out of earshot—"Why, Miss Rooke, the great dream is accomplished at last, and I have made my fortune."

"You, Mr. Gifford; you are rich?"

"Passably so," returned Hugh, carelessly, "although mine is no great heap of lucre compared to some of the colossal ones which tower around me. However, I don't complain. I have

my house, my carriage, and more than enough to support them with dignity; more than I ever expected to possess—more than I deserve."

"A house; a carriage?"

"Which I keep up as well as one so solitary can."

"Solitary?"

"Quite so. For although I have some good friends who are very civil to me in their houses, my own is lonely enough. The Parapets, for example——"

"Ah, you know the Parapets?"

"I owe to them such footing as I have in this slippery world of fashion."

"Miss Parapet is beautiful, is she not?"

"Most people call her so. She is strikingly graceful and well bred."

"You have known her long?"

"Not long; nor any such as she. You forget I am quite a *nouveau riche*."

"At least since your return from Europe."

"Oh, yes; since my return from Europe."

"And how long were you there?"

"Nearly a twelvemonth. I returned three months ago."

"And when did you leave California?"

"Almost immediately before that. I was in the Eastern States hardly a week before I sailed."

"And our friends at Armstrong's Bar?"

"Were all well and happy when I left them; and a few weeks ago they were all equally well, and happier still."

"Why happier?"

"What, of all things, should make them so? They are growing richer. Like myself, they have been having their turn of luck. Doctor Landale writes me that they have done so well that the Armstrongs think seriously of returning and settling, as they long since hoped to do, on the old family place at Saybrook. And the doctor hopes to have his cottage on the Clyde. And pretty Kitty is to be Mrs. Railes at Midsummer, and——"

"Tell me," interrupted Marian, to whom all these questions and answers had been vague and half meaningless, except as they drew near to the subject which most absorbed her thoughts, Hugh's last statement, suggestive as it was, stimulated an impatience which now overleaped her reserve. "Tell me, then, Hugh Gifford, since you have grown rich, where—where—is Virginia?"

Hugh's countenance fell. "I will tell you all when we m[illegible]

ee each other—without interruption. For the present I will nly say that we met directly on my return. The family still elieved me poor. It was arranged that a year should elapse—nother year of probation. That year has barely expired, nd——"

"Now, Miss Marian," cried Mr. Rivingstone, approaching, 'my friend Clyde here claims the fulfilment of your promise."

"He can scarcely forego it," said Mr. Clyde, "since it is his nly dance—his sole assertion of juvenility for the evening—and Miss Rooke has kindly promised to lend it lustre."

"To-morrow," whispered Hugh, hurriedly, "if I may call, I will finish my story." And Mr. Clyde bore off his prize at a moment when she was almost inclined to show fight rather than be captured. And Hugh, looking after in a dazed and helpless fashion, watched while his prairie flower mingled with the choice exotics of the ball-room, putting to shame the sweetest and most attractive among them; at least in the opinion of one connoisseur who fancied himself a qualified judge.

"You have known Miss Rooke in former days," said Mr. Rivingstone, drawing near and regarding our hero with interest.

"Yes. In the west—in California," replied Hugh, scarcely knowing how far he was justified in referring to Marian's previous life.

"Her fate seemed rather a sad one," continued the elder gentleman, gravely, "although not more so than that of many by whom it was equally undeserved. In a few years the world will marvel that things could occur among a Christian people such as ould disgrace the records of middle-age barbarians; and some ill deny they ever existed. But Marian Rooke is only one mong hundreds of those who will live and bear witness to the uth."

"I supposed you to be a Southerner," observed Gifford, cauously.

"I have lived in the South during many years of my life, else should not feel competent to judge it so freely. There is more od and more evil there than most Northerners believe; and th are misrepresented. What with philanthropists who get their facts at second hand on the one side, and bigoted partiwho would suppress facts altogether on the other, the South ill, I think, with both friends and foes in the North. But Rooke has enlightened you."

"She has told me," said Hugh, with some hesitation, "enough convince me that wrong can exist in the South as foul as the

bitterest abolitionist ever painted. But perhaps I have no right without her license to refer to such a subject."

"She has spoken of you before, and told me how far you were in her confidence."

"Indeed!"

"When Mr. Clyde proposed to introduce you I did not catch the name, but identified it afterwards. Marian has told me much of you."

"Miss Rooke is most kind to hold me in such remembrance."

"She was interested in your future. She looked forward to your marriage—I am versed in your private affairs, you see—and to your becoming distinguished hereafter."

"Distinguished?"

"She thought you had qualities which would ripen into valuable ones for your country. A great politician is Marian."

"I should scarcely have supposed, did I not know to the contrary, that one who had suffered so much by its institutions would feel much interest in the country which fostered and perpetuated them."

"Ah, women are so different from men in that respect. Their inspiration is more of His who said, 'They that are well need not a physician, but they that are sick.' The women will prove the best healers, and, in good time, the best peacemakers among us after all. But so far as Marian is concerned, she has no unmitigated complaint to make against her country's laws, bad as some of them may be."

"I do not understand you."

"Then I must leave her to finish a story which was only partly told. To change the subject—how do you like the family I heard Clyde mention just now? How do you like the Parapets?"

"Why," answerered Hugh, who thought the change of subject rather abrupt, "they are a most dignified and excellent family. Highly accomplished, of high breeding, and superior parts."

"They are like many families I have known in the South, at least in the characteristics you cite. But my Southern friends were not faultless, whereas you appear to think the Parapets——"

"I did not say so. On the contrary, however impeccable in a moral or social sense, I think them decidedly at fault politically. Why, do you know, that with all their wealth, lands, influence, position, and ancient name, so far as the public service is concerned, they positively do——"

"Nothing, I know; while our Southern Parapets do everything; so that, although working in different directions, the

effect about an equal amount of mischief. In the North the higher classes are unrepresented, and in the South the lower. Each will ultimately be forced to fulfil the neglected duty by agencies whose stress will be the more irresistible the longer they remain dormant."

"Our Parapets say, 'after them the deluge.'"

"And so say their Southern prototypes. But like the prophet who said it before them, they may yet see and feel the storm before their tenure is over. But here come one of them to check our treason."

"Excuse me, my dear fellow," cried Clinton Parapet, coming up, "but you are under an engagement which it will be dangerous not to fulfil; and, being in disgrace myself, I am well fitted to warn you of its pains and penalties."

"A thousand thanks. I have been thoughtless indeed, but through uncommon provocation. May I beg you, sir, to offer my compliments to Miss Rooke, and to say that I assume her permission to call?"

"With much pleasure. I am certain she will have much to hear and to tell."

"By Jupiter!" exclaimed Clinton, as the two young men wound their way back to the Parapet throng, "the mountain has come to Mahomet after all!"

CHAPTER IX.

GIFFORD had modestly described his pyramid of gold as small compared with others. It was not, however, so small as to fail to attract attention and homage. The very day after the great ball brought evidence to the contrary. His presence at that festivity was quickly known to many wistful adorers whom his erratic movements hitherto had enabled him to elude, but who now congratulated themselves that their victim had returned to town for the season, and could not hereafter escape their toils.

Upon his breakfast-table Hugh found an extraordinary variety of cards, notes, and other missives, chiefly from strangers, and which excited his surprise as to how the senders could even know of his existence. There were printed suggestions that he should buy his boots at the store of the general officer to whom he had been presented the night before; and requests that he should pat-

ronize in the way of dry goods the house of Dimity, Drilling, & Co, the senior partner being the parent of the young lady wh had been Clinton Parapet's for such an unconscionable numbe of dances on the same occasion.

There were, besides, a shop-card of Mr. McFenian's liquo establishment, down town, and a package of election ticket containing that patriot's name, as a candidate for some munic pal office of trust and emolument, with "McFenian's Una proachable Mountain Dew, at one dollar and fifty cents a gallon, underlined thereon; several playbills affixed to preposterous e logies of the "classic and scholarly performance of the Mela choly Dane and the Cardinal Duke," by an artist whose class cality must have been culled from Sunday newspapers, and who scholarship certainly went very little beyond writing his name an illustrated exhibit of the merits of the "Matutinal Regener tor, or Croto-Columbian Prize Cocktail," strengthened by th names of one hundred statesmen, divines, heroes, and poet who had been rescued through profuse indulgence in that cordi from the couch of disease and decrepitude to attain the highe pinnacle of health and fame; many kindred schedules of wo derful hair-dyes, apple-parers, life-restorers, lip-salves, seve shooters, water-cure establishments, and electrical machine together with a handsomely-printed statement on silver paper, the effect that there would be an auction sale of some of th choicest pews in the Reverend Dr. Gracie's new church, Fifth Avenue, that day, at one o'clock precisely; half cash, th balance on approved bills at sixty or ninety days.

But what struck Hugh as the oddest among these remarkab productions, was an enamelled card of rather large size, on whi appeared the figures of two cherubs, apparently struggling f the possession of a scroll, each having got hold of one end. O this scroll was inscribed in a text, surrounded by flourishes, th name "Salathiel Doke." When our hero rose in the mornin he found one of these cards lying on a chair by his bedside, an concluded it had found its way there by some mistake. B when in due course he went to his toilet-table, he discover that the error must have been duplicated, for "Salathiel Dok lay there as well. When he was taking his bath, the stead Englishman Hugh had engaged as a sort of major-domo, int mated through the door that Mr. Doke was most anxious to s him; that he had been informed Mr. Gifford was not yet dres ed, but that he declared he would wait; that he had made h way into the reception room on the ground-floor, where he w now engaged in conversing with a policeman through the wi

and should he, Dobson, request the policeman to take him
or would Mr. Gifford choose to see him?
Gifford chose the latter, by all means; since he had heard
ne mentioned, not disrespectfully, by his friend Mr. Clyde.
should not be ready to see any one for some time; so,
keep him waiting, his compliments, and would Mr. Doke
d enough to call an hour hence? To this proposal Mr.
vas pleased graciously to assent, although he favored the
ırbable Dobson as he departed with the expression of his
r as to what folks should be a week washin' themselves for.
ıs for such a want of sympathy might have been found
o very minute examination perhaps, but Dobson was too
ɜ to get the pertinacious visitor out of the house before his
ırveillance should be withdrawn in favor of his master's
ıst, to be over critical.
h was trying to read a leader in the *Optimist*, which con-
:hiefly of adjectives and personal pronouns, when a third
cherubs, striving to rend Salathiel Doke, were presented
, and, without waiting to be asked, the gentleman himself
:d Dobson into the room. He was a short, stoutish man,
large beard, which should have been grizzled, but which
ed to a changeable color. That is to say, it was of a glit-
metallic black in the shade or by candle-light, and a mis-
ous sea-green when viewed in the rays of the sun. This
vas suffered to grow as it listed, save on about two inches
upper lip, where it was carefully scraped off, leaving the
/id and indignant below. Over each corner of the mouth,
re, two tufts of truncated moustache were permitted to
ı, stiff with the vigor which was prohibited from develop-
elf elsewhere. Mr. Doke's eyes were small, and would
een colorless had they not been slightly bloodshot; his
as long and peaked, but enlarged suddenly at the base of
trils, so as to give an idea that sections of two incongru-
es had through some accident been pieced together. The
ıs cut very short, and stood up in bristles all over the
and the mouth was armed with rows of short, white teeth,
were almost constantly displayed.
Doke's expression was suggestive of the hybrid that he
eing of that pleasant compound of Jesuit and rowdy which
wn to be something too prevalent in the Atlantic cities,
ich is not prone to alleviate the effect of numbers, by
its light under a bushel. The general results which ac-
ım pouring multitudes of ignorant immigrants, bound by
of common nationality and religion, into the crowded

streets of seaboard towns, instead of modifying their power o mischief by scattering them over the boundless prairie, hav now been sufficiently felt and appreciated to need no descriptio here. One of those results was Mr. Salathiel Doke; and h was, perhaps, a favorable specimen of the Americanized Celt Of the origin of his name, patronymic or other, history make no sign; but the Dennises and Patricks and Terences usuall die out in the second republican generation, the latter dyin harder than the others; although why Irish-Americans shoul cleave to a prenomen borrowed from an African slave, is a enigma difficult to solve. However, the present Mr. Doke wa innocent of such a taint, and probably owed his christian nam —if the term be not inapplicable—to a progenitor who ha learned to be proud of the fame of his countryman, Dr. Croly Like the prince of Naphtali, Mr. Doke was a great man in I rael, as he, in good season, let Gifford understand; but the la ter had time to speculate neither on his visitor's person nor hi origin, since Mr. Doke instantly attacked him in a manner whic compelled the adoption of a vigilant and exclusive defensive.

"Ho! ho! ho!" roared Mr. Doke at the top of his voic and, before his host knew what he was at, slapping him vigo ously on the back, "How are yer? Ho! ho! ho! managed t crawl out o' bed, at last, have yer? I bin' down to Fulto Market, and eat two dozen on the half-shell at Dorlon's before come here fust, I did. What yer doin' with them things?" an he took up an egg-cup which Hugh had been in the act of usin and capsized the contents of the egg into a saucer. "That handier, ain't it? Ho! ho! ho! and how are yer, anyhow?"

Gifford was so taken aback by the assurance—the *elan* of h assailant—so persuaded that no sane human being would acco another in such a way unless they had met before, that h yielded instinctively to the impression that he must really be fo getting some old friend whom he ought to remember, and foun himself responding to Mr. Doke's almost superhuman han shakes and hyena-grins before, as the phrase goes, he kne where he was.

"I'm devilish glad to see yer," pursued Salathiel, with a fre burst of laughter, and, wringing his host's hand with franti energy, "That's so. Ha! ha! ha! I hain't had time to loo at the paper to-day; let's have a squint," and he took th journal from Gifford's knees. "Let's see what the gay old ow has to say for himself. Circulation increased ten thousand sin yesterday. Certingly, nuthin' shorter. He's a lively old skun ain't he? Only paper there is though. Only paper that's post

on the true distribootion of political power, and writin' just the way common folks talk, so they can always understand it. Highfalutin' don't go down for papers in York. Folks hain't got time to study 'em out. Ha! ha! ha! and how are yer, anyhow?"

"Well," said Hugh, beginning to recover himself at last, "I'm tolerably, thank you. But am I mistaken in supposing that we have met before?"

"Oh, no," responded the other, "Oh dear, no. We've met, sure enough. Didn't know as you'd recollect it, though. That smells nice now, don't it?" and Mr. Doke took a cigar from the mantel and quietly lighted it, continuing his discourse between the puffs. "That's genuine, sure. Some folks have no eye for faces—I have. It's part o' my business. Many and many's the vote I've got by spottin' a man, and recollecting his name just when he was a waverin' after, may be, takin' his V from both sides. He! he! he! You didn't say nothin' about bitters, did yer?"

"No, I didn't," answered Hugh, quietly; "but I will, if you like. Dobson, a bottle of brandy, glasses, and Boker's bitters. Pray mix for yourself, sir; and then, perhaps, you'll tell me whether it was in Boston or in California—in San Francisco, perhaps—that I had the pleasure——"

"Oh no," interrupted Mr. Doke, "Oh dear, no. I don't go out of York if I know it. It's a good enough town for me. I don't count it a true sign of a patriot to be runnin' about from pillar to post all over Ameriky when there's such a rippin' good burg as this to stay in;" and the speaker, by way of emphasizing his contentment, hooked a second chair toward him with his foot, and stretched his legs thereon in great ease and comfort.

"Then, may I ask where?"

"You may that. I met yer one day comin' out of old Carboy's office, in Wall Street. I was there to get his assessment for puttin' through the Unscratched Scallywag ticket for the next moonicipal, and you was there to buy stocks. We met, as they say, on the Ri-al-ter, where muchants most do congregate. I dunno who got stuck, but it weren't me. The Scallywags was elected by a large majority, and if you was histed on Erie or Harlem it'll be because old Carboy is too many for yer. Ha! ha! ha! better luck next time. My respecks"

"Thank you. You'll excuse my restricting myself to coffee, as I don't take spirits, and hardly feel the need of a tonic so early in the day. I have, I believe, the pleasure of addressing Mr. Doke?"

"That's so. S. Doke in general, Sal Doke among the b'hoys, Colonel Doke at Gammony Hall, Salathiel Doke, Esquire, on School Committees and in the papers. You can take yer chice."

Hugh bowed. "Well, Mr. Doke, perhaps you will now tell me how I can serve you."

"Ho! ho! ho! That's reversin' the ingine, that is. Howlin' good cigars o' yourn. I'll take a few if you don't mind. Serve *me*. He! he! he! That's votin' the ticket backwards; putting the cart before the horse. Why, Judge, I come here to serve *you!*"

Hugh bowed again. "I'm greatly obliged, I'm sure, only——"

"Only you don't see how I can! Don't put too fine a point on it! Ha! ha! ha! You don't see how I can."

"Why, you perceive in my ignorance of your profession and influence——"

"Sech," interposed Mr. Doke, settling himself more comfortably by throwing one leg over the arm of his chair, and ejecting his smoke in half-benignant, half-speculative puffs—"Sech is fame; a man invents a patent back-action bowie slicer, or scribbles a voloom of peek-a-boo pomes, and his name is girdled round about the airth in forty minutes—is big in mouths of widest censor! But direct the politics of a great *me*tropolis—reggerlate the internal affairs of a million haughty and screechin' freemen—manipoolate every ticket for three years in the Gammony interest, kerryin' even the unterrified Sixth in the holler of yer hand, until yer consoomate the triumph of liberty in an overwhelmin' majority for the whole ticket of Unscratched Scallywags, and then not to be heard tell of! Why, Mr. President, it's enough to make a man, however patriotic, blush for the advertisin' mediums of the community he has served! Enough to make him abandon, in disgust, the service of that public which has proved so ungrateful, and devote to his own private aggrandizement the talents so imperfectly requited!"

"As I am and have been an utter stranger," began Hugh, apologetically, "and scarcely know a dozen names in the city——"

"It is the cuss," continued the orator, waving his hand as if to deprecate any interruption to his peroration—"It is the cuss of Republican communities that they are prone to be ungrateful; it should be, above all others, our endeavor to wipe out that reproach, so far as it is applicable to the case of our heroic fellow-citizen, Colonel S. Doke. That, sir, is an extract from a speech

made in the walls of Gammony by Erin's pure and high-souled orator, Phœnix O'Grady, when candidate for City Attorney, I bein' Chairman of the Nominating Committee."

"I've heard complaints that Mr. O'Grady permitted some heavy claims, due the city from individuals, to lapse; and that his *laches*, however influenced, cost New York a million or more of money."

"A base fabrication," exclaimed Doke, frowning sternly, "invented by the nigger-worshippers, who hate O'Grady, for his advocacy of the interests of his noble and enlightened countrymen. However, that's neither here or there. Comin' more immejiately to the question before the meeting, I've heard tell of you, sir, if you haven't heard tell of me."

"Pardon me. I *have* heard of you, Mr. Doke," said Gifford, soothingly, "through my friend, Mr. Clyde. I merely intended to express my ignorance of your particular station and pursuits."

"Oh, Eldon talked about me, did he?" inquired Mr. Doke, somewhat mollified.

"He spoke of you as a celebrity."

"I reckon he might without setting him back any. Why, do you know, if it hadn't been for me, he'd never kerried out that precious little game o' his, that ended in nominatin' Spidershank and upsettin' the Locomotive Bill?"

"No," marvelled Gifford, quite innocent of the whole affair; "wouldn't he, though?"

"Fact. While he fixed the legislatur, I cooked Gammony. And neither of 'em could have worked without the other."

"I see."

"The Silver-grays and the Dough-heads could pull together for once, you know," added Mr. Doke, explanatorily, "when there was so much money in a thing. But, now," said the speaker, waving aside all previous subjects of conversation, and mixing another cocktail to go on with—"now, about *your* affair."

Mr. Doke paused for a reply; and Hugh, seeing one was expected, waited a moment or two, and then asked vaguely, "What affair?"

"Ha! ha! ha! That's a good 'un! I take it there's only one kind of affair in which the services of Salathiel Doke is requisite. Here you are surrounded by gilded luxury, havin', as I may say, the entry to good society, and requirin' only one thing to complete the advantages of your position. Only one thing you need, and for that the assistance of Doke is indispensable."

"I am still in the dark."

"Look a hear! Be you a patriot? Be you anxious your country? Does your bosom swell with a lofty desi a leader among men? Would you admire to have you writ high in the annals of history? If that's so, Dok man."

"I begin to perceive."

"I allowed you only wanted one thing—havin', as y say, youth, health, and wealth—only one thing is needec happy land to finish off the sum of human felicity; thing—office. To that giddy height, Doke's is the ha can smooth yer way."

"But to what kind of office," asked Hugh, doubtfully, ' refer? and, supposing a candidate to be qualified, upc conditions are your services proffered?"

Mr. Doke smiled. There was a refreshing simplicity t durated and experienced mind, both in the idea of any p qualification being essential to a candidate's success, and that there could be any possible obscurity as to the co to be exacted for assuring it. He gazed upon Gifford for with something of that mingling of pity and contempt with an old campaigner, worn and battle-scarred, rega juvenile recruit whose toils and hazards are all before hi

"Look a hear!" he said at length, "there's different k offices, and there's different kinds o' ways to get at 'e just like this," and he drew from his pocket five silver coi laid them on the table; a half dime, a dime, a quarter half dollar, and a dollar. "This 'ere kitten's eye stan little berth like common councillor, or school commissioner as I am. This one next to it might be an alderman, or surrogate. The quarter dollar signifies p'raps a repres to the state legislatur, or some minor state office. The state senator, or, may be, congressman. Finally, the b is a United States senator, or, possibly, a governor. Th just for signs. Now, the higher the office, the wider is t which has to be worked, the more wires there is to pull it, and the more it costs to pay for hands to pull 'em. T there is about it."

"And do you mean to say," said Hugh, with some indig "that a man who cherishes the honorable ambition to s country, in either of these capacities, must pay money in t uated scale to achieve it?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Mr. Doke. "Did you ever thing of vally yet without payin' for 't? D'ye suppose

going to all the labor and expense of ward and country organizations, payin' the rent of halls, and whole fortins in printin', and banners, and transparencies, let alone the rum of half the fightin' men in the district, and black mailin' the papers, and takin' the risk now and again of stuffin' a ballot box, just for the sake of amusin' theirselves? Go way! you ain't no baby to swallow sech stuff as that!"

"Why, as to necessary expenses in election time," modified Gifford, "they may be all right and proper; but bribery and corruption in a free country like this——"

"He! he! he! Don't let any of the Gammony boys hear yer talk that way, if we set out to run yer in one o' the city districts. They'd reckon yer a Dead Beat—a psalm singin' blower, they'd call yer, that won't come down. Necessary expenses! Election time! He! he! he! Why, the expenses are runnin' always, in election time or out on't. Only when votin' day's comin' on the cash is paid up, 'cause then it goes further, and tells more! I know they work it different up in St. Lawrence, and the rest o' them old-fashioned back counties, where they put on their Sunday-go-to-meetins to vote in, and shut up the toddy shops; but sech ways don't go down in York. York's a live town, I tell yer! That's so. And pint early, and pint often, is the motto for them who want handles to their names, or to finger the people's money!"

"In a word, Mr. Doke," said Hugh, impatiently, "what do you propose?"

Mr. Doke peered at his host mysteriously for a space, without speaking, and then glanced rapidly about the handsome apartment with the apparent design of taking an auctioneer's inventory of its contents, before he replied:

"Slick house this o' yourn, ain't it?"

"It is a very comfortable one."

"How much might it have cost yer, now?"

Hugh laughed, but answered the question.

"You're a pooty rich man, ain't yer?"

"Pray what has that to do with our discussion?"

"Only that I don't want to be onreasonably hard on yer. I ain't one o' these 'ere kind o' men who want all the fat; and what I say, I'll do. Make up yer mind what sort o' nomination 'll suit, and in about ten days I'll tell yer what'll be the figger."

"You mean how much I must pay to secure the nomination?"

"Well, not to cipher it too fine, that's about the way to put it. Only don't take my word for anythin'. Just ask Mr. Clyde, or any other man posted in politics, and satisfy yourself what Doke

can do before you trust him. Don't take nothin' on any one man's word. That's *my* style. How does it suit *you* ?"

"It seems prudent enough; especially in so delicate an affair. As a matter of curiosity, now, Mr. Doke, at what would you appraise the congressional nomination for the —th district ?"

"You mean the figger ? Well, now, it's a thing that has to be gone into some to get it exact. You see there's generally a kind of double-barrelled arrangement; one for the nomination, the other for election. Of course the Hall can insure the first, but the second is more expensive, likewise more uncertain. I couldn't tell you percise, not right off; I couldn't, really. It's hard times just now, that's a fact; and one o' the Sachems is putting up a new block on his Central Park property; and another's bought out the Rising Star Brewery, half on time. I allow it's likely to be steep; but I'd rayther not name anythin' ontil we've both had time to turn it over."

"Very well, Mr. Doke," said Gifford, rising, "I will, as you suggest, take the matter into consideration; you can do the same, and we can compare notes hereafter."

"All right. No harm done, anyhow. I heard you had some leanin's towards public life, and that bein' in my line I just thought I'd call. Dreadful good brandy o' yourn. Ha! ha! ha! My respecks. Excuse my French. You talk with Mr. Clyde, and ask him what Doke can do. He'll tell yer I ain't one o' these 'ere kind o' men who go about, blowin' about what they can't do! He! he! he! Thank yer, I don't care if I do take another cigar."

"Take a dozen."

"Well, since yer so pressin' I think I will. Shan't get such weeds up to Jones's Wood—that's where I'm going—mass meetin' of laboring men, to protest against wastin' the public money on a new system of drainage. Spohr Hall, yer know. Oppersition; but we're goin' to split a ticket, and fetch in our own men. Ho! ho! ho!"

"Good morning, Mr. Doke."

"Mornin'. Only one word more to say, and the best of friends must part. Only one word—Mum!" and Mr. Doke pressed his forefinger to his prepossessing mouth. "We'll do business, I don't doubt. He! he! he! I always do business with men o' the right kind! Only Mum! you know; except, of course, inquirin' as to character, and so forth. I don't fear that sort o' scrootiny. And when yer posted on Doke, I'll say, for further pettikilars see small bills! Ho! ho! ho! So good-*bye*, Mr. Gifford! Good mornin'!"

And the political aspirant was left alone with his *Optimist*.

CHAPTER X.

'ou think my conduct culpable, then?"
'o be candid, I do not quite approve it.'
Would you have had me tell all at the first greeting; walk
'old into an ambuscade; feeling that rocks were there, drive
certain shipwreck?"
Who can ever tell the effect of confidence; whether it might
ave dispersed the hidden enemy—have melted the rocks?
In all such cases do we not judge after the event? Which
boast, 'See I have escaped such a danger,' when a nobler
e might have obviated it altogether, and no one suffered
g?"
'ou think I have inflicted a wrong then; you think me
d—a criminal."
do not say that. Perhaps you are entirely right. Your
tunities to judge were surely of the best. I only said, since
sked me the question, and viewing the subject with such
as I have, that I did not quite approve the course you had
ed."
gh rose and paced the room impatiently. He had told
n the whole story of his adventures since they had parted.
)w he amassed his fortune, and how a foolish man had
/ed what half-a-dozen wise ones had failed in when he help-
m to gain it. Of how he had returned all flushed with his
)orn wealth, only to hide its every sign in the old haunts,
mong the old friends, where it would have been hailed with
st rapture. Of how he had used this touch-stone of pov-
o test the affection of Virginia Chester; and had found it,
e quick event so clearly proved, to be no current coin.
! Gifford knew perfectly well—instinctively—that, what-
Marian's feelings, she would not approve of the episode in
ion. It is true that when he came to its recital, he suffered
lf for a few fleeting moments to be deceived. Deceived
vondrously beautiful blush which ran swiftly up to Marian's
, and was followed by a marble paleness, when she first
l that Virginia was wedded to another, and Hugh Gifford a
nan. But this transitory emotion—the sign merely of feel-
was no true index of the decision of her judgment—no

mark that her sense of justice could be blinded or misled. Marian's first and strongest instinct was an abhorrence of deception. No one had ever hurt or pained her in all her laughing days of childhood—in all her happy days of girlhood—up to the moment of the catastrophe, whose shadow was sharp and black indeed, but too sudden to reverse the habits of a whole previous life. That poor Hugh's experience had left him less ingenuous, and so less ready to sympathize with or to participate in this particular virtue, we need not now enforce. But he had not been near Marian for many months in daily and familiar intercourse, he had not loved Marian so deeply for most of those months, without cherishing in his breast a monitor, sometimes dormant, sometimes watchful, but never absent, which told him unerringly what that pure nature of hers would denounce as wrong, and what it would permit to pass unchallenged. When he had practised his ruse with Virginia, the monitor was dormant; but when the story was passing from his lips to Marian's ears, the monitor was cruelly active. So Hugh adopted man's frequent and most rational argument, and tried to stifle its voice by getting angry.

"Your scruples are too fastidious," he complained, "to apply to the realities of life. By what law of right, what precept of conscience, should a man be obliged to incur the risk of his life's happiness rather than by a harmless experiment to satisfy himself whether he is about to place it in safe keeping?"

"What is right is never too fastidious," said Marian, gently; "and the Golden Rule suggests both the law and the precept that you ask for."

"I should not shrink from such an ordeal, if applied to myself."

"How could you, since from the conditions of the case you would be ignorant of its application?"

"I mean as regards the time of probation."

"If you were purposely kept in ignorance of its real object?"

"If my love were sincere, that could make no difference."

"You have hit it at last. If your love were sincere! Ah, my friend, had your love been sincere, you never had tried such an experiment. The love which is sincere would have accepted all, and doubted nothing. Your fears as to Virginia's motives were but the reflexes of your own inconstancy!"

"Even admitting this—for argument's sake—wherein am I so culpable, since, had she been faithful, I was bound to keep my promise?"

"Because you subjected her to a temptation for which you

had no warranty. Because, when she plighted her troth and you reciprocated the pledge, it was a compact between erring, finite, human beings, and not between spotless angels. Because there was no condition annexed that either party should prove to be perfection in the hour of trial; but that they would each strive their feeble best to approach it. You knew well what influences surrounded Virginia—influences which had surrounded her from her birth. You knew that if those influences tended to produce a moral warp, especially objectionable, your duty was to seek to counteract it. What did you do? Precisely what was calculated to encourage the perversion and insure its catastrophe!"

"Enough, Marian. I remember we have been over such a ground as this before. I might have known how severely you would judge me," he added, bitterly.

"I was your adviser then, and if now your judge, only a self-imposed one."

"I pleaded then as I plead now, that there was one thing wanting which made your advice so difficult to follow. Do you remember it?"

"Yes," said Marian, with a heightened color, "I do remember it. On the same occasion it was agreed that we should always be friends."

"Friends!"

"And," she continued, steadfastly, "as nothing was said to make us otherwise then, so I hope nothing will make us otherwise now."

"Friends!" he repeated. "Always friends! Oh, Marian, Marian, can we never be anything more?"

The girl did not answer, but turned very pale, as one does when a crisis is coming which cannot be averted, when nothing can be thrown away, not even words, without weakening that brace of the nerves which is needed to meet the expected strain. Her lips slightly parted, as they always did at moments of strong excitement; and her bust heaved up and down as does the breezeless sea in sympathy with the still distant but approaching storm. Beautiful was Marian always; but, like all things not quite passionless, more beautiful in action than in repose.

"Can we never be anything more? Is that cold, cold word to be used now that there is no bar between us? Are all our hours of sympathy, whispers of consolation, the sweet dreams of beauty and happiness which gilded our coarse, mean lives, those very lives themselves risked and redeemed side by side, are these to bring no softer, warmer fruit than icy friendship?"

"What would you have, Hugh?" she whispered mechanically, almost inaudibly.

"What would I have?" he echoed, marking with eager delight those signs that seemed to say he would not ask in vain. "Hear the woman! as if she did not know and feel, in her inmost soul, better than words can teach her. What would I have? Oh, Marian, can it be that you do *not* know? Not know that I love you deeply, passionately, eternally; and would have you love me in return?"

"This fire is too swift, too sudden," she murmured, her face dyeing crimson, and paling rapidly again. He caught her hand, which she vainly strove to free.

"Swift! sudden! Why, it has been burning for years! Is it not more than two since we toiled together through the heart of the continent? And was it not then and there that the fire was kindled? Was it not then that, for the first time in my hard, bitter life, I was taught to see there was beauty and joy in this barren world, and that life might after all be worth the living? Did I not learn then that there were souls innocent of narrow, canting prejudice, free of the corroding taint of gold-grubbing? Did I not gaze then, through portals for the first time unbarred, on a new and brighter existence, whose possibility, however distant, made me endure and struggle on in the hope of one day attaining it?"

"Do you mean, Gifford, to say that——"

"That I have loved you with all my soul since the night before we fought the Indians! That I knew that night, if life were spared to us, mine would never know love again but for you. Ah, Marian, it was not I who was your knight—not I who bore your glove—your little Testament—through that desperate strife; but I was not the less vowed thenceforth to your service."

"You saw it then?" she asked, half smiling in the midst of the momentous tumult these words were exciting.

"Yes; and knew how Luke came by it. More, Marian; I knew that Luke loved you with a fervid, honest, manly love—"

"Poor, good Luke!" murmured Marian.

"But not, Marian—oh, not with a love like mine! I would not disparage what I know for manly and sincere, but love can be all that, and more than that, and yet be far, far below mine! The sun would shine, the grass would grow, the spheres continue their music for one who felt a love like that, even if unrequited; but not for me, Marian! For once this tale is told, darkness, obstruction, silence, would come and welcome, too,

with disappointment. You reproach me with inconstancy, Marian; ah, me! who made me inconstant?"

"Alas!"

"Alas, indeed, if you regret it! I mean if for my sake as well as for that of another! Do you mean you cannot return my love? For Heaven's sake don't—don't say that! Think, Marian, how very natural it was—I mean for one born and bred like me—to passionately love when he met one like you! Think of how the gloomy vista of his future was hung around after that with the warm, glowing colors of your Southern imagination! Think of how your dear presence, all glorious with hope, lighted up the path which had always before seemed so dark, so profitless, and so monotonous; and then think how natural it was that such a presence, in scattering the promise of gladness, should also sow the seeds of love.

"I know myself weak—vain—a selfish egotist, no doubt. Let me have all the censure I deserve, but let me not be condemned without extenuation. The world has not been altogether kind to me. An unhappy childhood, a joyless youth, a morose and cynical manhood, are not all the fault of him who suffers or exhibits them. Is it vanity to say I think there is some little good buried among this ill, some gold amid this dross, some service to mankind below this misanthropy, if a tender hand be haply found which, like an enchanter's, shall reveal and put them to their noblest uses? Marian, dearest Marian, shall this hand be yours?"

And there was more of this talk—wild, heated, and incoherent, indeed, but terribly earnest, for the man's heart was on his tongue, and like all men of his stamp, once the floodgates were open, he made no reservation. He drew a sketch of his joy, his rapture, when through the good offices of simple, grateful Ike, he saw his way to wealth such as he never dreamed of possessing; joy to think that now there was at least a chance—remote though it might be—that he could one day lay at Marian's feet fortune, heart, all! Of how he had hurried from Berkshire, after doing what he deemed his duty there, and sought Marian in New York—to find that she had sailed for Europe. Of how he had followed her across the sea, and hunted up and down the continent for weeks and months, to be again foiled and disappointed. And when he had found her at last—when he had a home, a fortune worthy of such a mistress, with a heart which, if unworthy, was yet so supremely devoted—would she, would Marian, disappoint him again now?

And his arm had stolen about her waist during these passion-

ate adjurations, and his pleading face came nearer and nearer while he poured forth a story of love, so earnest and eloquent, that it seemed impossible for Marian, with her strong prepossession and her warm Southern blood, to resist its force.

And yet she did so. There was something repugnant to her delicacy—notwithstanding the stress which backed Hugh Gifford's suit—in listening to the tale of the way he had ended the old love, and in the same hour accepting the position of the new. Yet Hugh could scarcely have told one story without telling the other. The latter was the complement—in some sort the justification—of the former. And he was free; not, after all, by his own act so much as by Virginia's. Still, Marian was faithful as she had ever been, in spite of the strongest temptations, to her convictions of right and of maidenly propriety. She had been tried before, and did not hesitate; she did not falter now.

"Listen, Hugh," she said, as she disengaged herself from his eager arms, and, standing apart, with a pale face, but a steady voice, made answer to his passionate speeches, "I have been to blame—unwittingly, perhaps, but still in part to blame for the miscarriage of your engagement with Virginia. I will not put myself in the position of hastening to fill a place I have helped to vacate. Nor do I think promises on either side exchanged in the first moments of our meeting are, under all the circumstances, either delicate or proper. Therefore, I cannot give the pledge you ask of me."

"Your heart is entangled elsewhere!" he cried, hotly. "I remember now; even at the ball I heard you were engaged. Your guardian's friend—Mr. Clyde—told me as much."

"He must have been in jest. Or he referred, perhaps, to the dance for which I was indeed engaged—to himself. The pledge I refuse to give to you I have given to no other."

"But, Marian, this is mere trifling; trifling with the happiness of both; for I feel—I know that I am not quite indifferent to you. Speak; is not this true, Marian? I charge you to answer, and answer faithfully."

A bright blush rose slowly over the girl's face, until it crimsoned even to her glossy hair. "It is true, Gifford."

"And yet," he exclaimed joyfully, "yet you will make no pledge—will plight no troth?"

"Hear me," answered Marian, "and if you can with patience. I am not quite satisfied either with you or with myself; and I think neither will be the worse for an ordeal which for your part you have said you would not shrink from."

"I do not understand."

ou have said that, even if ignorant of the real object of
n ordeal, it could yet, if your love were sincere, make no
nce in it. I propose just such an one."
ım still in the dark."
ıe measure you offered to Virginia Chester I would now
ut to you—and to myself as well. You should not shrink
ıis application of the golden rule—this test of constancy—
ıng to your own practice, your own showing."
ıu would have me wait for a year?" said Hugh, with a
ıed face, as he began to perceive her drift.
vould prefer it. Nay, I will make no other promise. Let
months roll by, each to be free as Virginia was to set aside
t at will. If, at their expiration, your mind be unchanged,
ll find mine no less so."
ıese are hard terms, Marian."
you say so, you will make me doubt you. Is it agreed?"
ıd I cannot but think unnecessary ones. If we love each
and surely we do, and if wrong is done to no living crea-
ıside, and surely none is done, why so cruel a delay?"
ıd if you shrink from it," said Marian, rather proudly,
nust not expect me to rate your constancy very high; in
case, am I not right to impose the delay?"
ıough, Marian. Let it be as you will. Let it be my pur-
for the wrong, if wrong it was, inflicted upon Virginia.
at least have earned your forgiveness for that sin."
ıd for all others, Hugh. Do not think this probation
ble to me. Far from it. I will confess so much. But it
to me right; and I would fain you thought so too."
I try, Marian; and indeed what is right to you cannot be
ıse to me. Only I have learned, and that so well that
son to the contrary cannot undo the conviction, that it is
der for man to wait than for woman."
ıresy! Unless you mean he is less likely to be faithful."
ait and see!"

CHAPTER XI.

Dyce Parapet walked down Fifth Avenue in no very con-
frame of mind. His gloves were of as cool a gray, his
f as radiant a jet, his trousers of as spotless a pearl, his

coat of as glossy a black, his neckcloth of as delicate a white as they usually were when he walked down Fifth Avenue of a morning. But his face was by no means of as smooth and benignant an expression as it was its custom to be. For perhaps the eighth or tenthtime in his life, Mr. Parapet was ruffled; ruffled when another would have been very angry. A calamity had befallen his house. A blot threatened to affix its permanent stain upon his escutcheon. A necessity for prompt action to avert the threatened evil had arisen. To be at once annoyed and compelled to exhibit energy was a complication of misfortune whose effects upon Mr. Parapet may be measured by its singularity. Either grievance alone he would have endured with his ordinary chronic placidity. The two together were sufficient to ruffle its surface.

Clinton Parapet—the cream of cream of youths, only sons, and Parapetian representatives—had been seen driving in the park that beautiful but ineligible heiress of the cotton trade—Miss Flora Dimity. Not in the dusky evening, with a quiet equipage stealing along out-of-the-way roads, as if such an atrocity were to be committed at all, reason and good sense would counsel; but with a pair of slashing grays, known to the whole town, an open carriage through the most frequented drives of the Central Park, at the hour of high fashion, flaunting up and down in the eyes of the chattering world as if in veriest defiance to give his crime the widest publicity.

"Just now, too," moaned Mrs. Parapet, "when that odious man's odious new shop is the talk of the whole country; when its height and its breadth, and its length, and the number of its simpering shopmen, and the yards of stuff they sell in a day are published in every newspaper! It seems as if when young men *do* commit a blunder, it must needs be advertised in the most conspicuous and objectionable of settings."

"May there not be, after all, some mistake?" suggested Mr. Parapet, soothingly. "There are more than one pair of grays—many young men not unlike Clinton. You informant——"

"Alas! The best authority! Indeed half a dozen of them! Mrs. Crespigny, with her eye of lynx and heart of steel, drove here the same afternoon—made a pretence of returning a volume of Edith's—and congratulated us incidentally as she was leaving! She was perfectly delighted, bursting with the thing during her whole visit, and her artistic self-control, putting it off for an exit speech, was enough to make one go mad! Afterwards the Van Tassels called; they were simply angry, on Henrietta's account you know, and wondered whether it was the last Parisian mode

to drive out one's tradespeople's daughters. And Edith heard it from the Slammerhorns at the opera; they were neither delighted nor angry, but sorry; pitied her beautifully, she said; and asked when it was to be, and could it not be stopped in some way. They had heard that busybody, De Talbot Jones, tell it to Mrs. Madison Custard; and when people like that, who are on the fringe of society, get hold of a story, you know what it means! How I grieve that Clinton came from abroad!"

"Unfortunate, truly unfortunate," sympathized Mr. Parapet, caressing his white hands as if some one had slighted or injured them, and they needed a little petting to make them come round.

"Unfortunate? It's irreparable, almost. The next thing will be a paragraph in the *Sphere* or the *Optimist*. Really, if it is not one thing, it appears it must be another. How we have felicitated ourselves on Clinton's freedom from vice, even from the lighter dissipations common to his years, and compared him to others less fortunate! But of what avail is it to escape having delirium tremens like young Schindy, or not to forge on a grandfather, like Tom Creasy, if a son is to turn out like this! A Cranstoun might have endured. At a Slammerhorn I might have smiled in silence. Even with a Van Boorem my chagrin, though sharp, might have been smothered. But a—a—Dimity!"

"But, my dear," said her husband, still affectionately consoling his hands, "since what's done cannot be undone——"

"Can it not? It strikes me that is precisely the point. I am impressed with a conviction that it is to undo we ought, or rather *you* ought, to bend all your energies. Think of Edith's prospects dragged down by a Dimity! Think of a cotton woof spun into the family line! Distinctly, what is done *must* be undone!"

"But how? The young people have been seen driving in the park. *Voila tout*. It's very sad, but I see no way of undoing it."

"Tut! the drive is nothing save as the index and prologue of what has preceded, and may follow it. We must seize on the occasion to reverse any previous understanding, to forestall any injurious consequences. Either Clinton must pledge himself to see Flora Dimity no more, or he must at once be sent abroad."

"You remember, of course, that he is his own master?"

"Nominally and technically he is so; but it cannot be that this girl has gained such a hold in two weeks as to induce him to set at defiance both your authority and mine. To interpose them at least is better than mere quiescence, even should they prove to have been interposed in vain."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Mr. Parapet, with a happ inspiration; "I'll speak to Clinton of course, and do what I c in the way of direct expostulation; but I'll also get young Gi ford to attack him. Sensible fellow young Gifford, very. H sharp perceptions and remarkably sound views for his years, a Clinton thinks more of him than of any other young man of h acquaintance."

Mrs. Parapet thought well of the idea. Gifford was a sort person who would see at a glance the horrible incongruity of a alliance between a Parapet and a Dimity. He was one of tho who, if they cannot exactly boast *pur sang* themselves, have ver just notions of its quality and responsibility. A young man hin self, he could, with a good grace, point out the grave distinc tion which lies between venial flirtation and criminal matrimony Moreover, his great respect for Edith would surely prompt hi to do all in his power to prevent a step which would be at onc so painful to her feelings, and so damaging to her future pro pects. Gifford was, therefore, elected member of the priv council, which was to circumvent the ambitious scheme imputed to pretty Flora Dimity.

So, when Mr. Parapet got into Union Square and saw Hugh standing and looking up disconsolately at the equestrian figure of the father of his country, he hooked the young gentleman incontinently by the arm, and led him away captive to his club. The meeting was *apropos*, since Hugh had some advice to ask as well as to give; and Mr. Parapet was the first of whom he had resolved to seek it.

Our hero heard the statement of his companion with the gravity befitting a councillor received into the confidence of a reverend senior, and the caution suitable to the fidelity due to his friendship for a son.

"Mere flirtation and nonsense, my dear sir," was the consolatory opinion he felt justified in expressing. "The young lady is excessively pretty, and Clinton is amazingly fond of pretty girls. But I'm quite sure he has no serious intentions."

"I'm pleased to hear you say so, and Mrs. Parapet would be delighted. But, pray how can you be *sure* of such a thing?"

"Ah, well, that may be a *facon de parler* perhaps. I mean to imply the conviction that were Clinton's sentiments of a graver character, they would find no such public expression."

"Yet he should be cautious to avoid the imputation of anything dishonorable."

"My dear sir, he is your son, and I'm confident if he thought his conduct obnoxious to such a censure, a word or two would

set him right. Of course a young gentleman could not do such things abroad as he does with Miss Dimity. But if American girls *will* walk and drive and go to the opera without duennas, and the custom is permitted by society, Clinton is not individually responsible for it."

"You believe then——"

"That he is merely doing what inclination suggests when no particular reason occurs for declining to gratify it. The young lady is perhaps a little flattered, and encourages him quite as much as she ought."

"I hope you'll say as much to Mrs. Parapet."

"With much pleasure, if you think it will be in the least gratifying to her."

"It certainly will be. But you see she will draw this distinction; that what Miss Dimity is doing would not be done by young women of Clinton's own set, and that her own will put only one construction upon it, in which the world might generally uphold them, and thus he may become awkwardly entangled before he has even considered what he is about."

"You will speak with him, however, and point out this danger?"

"At once; and, if you don't object, I would ask you to do the same. The friend may well put such a case in a more telling light than the father."

"He might possibly have the credit of being quite disinterested."

"Precisely. But there is a dilemma which may prove impracticable for either. Suppose, after all, his heart should be touched; suppose he has been infatuated to such a degree as to commit himself?"

"Really," laughed Gifford, "I don't think a few dances and promenades, or even this unfortunate drive in the park, can fairly justify so terrible a suspicion. Yet, even were it to prove well founded, I should not despair."

"You have a panacea for even such an evil?"

"I have found it so. You are consulting one, I may observe, not entirely without experience. If matters have gone such a length, I would counsel, not direct opposition, but masterly inactivity. Get Clinton to agree to a year's delay: he might chafe, but the hope of condoning the main offence would probably induce his acquiescence; and in that year, you may depend, sir, one of the contracting parties will find reason or excuse to escape the bond."

He spoke rather bitterly, and his companion looked at him

with surprise, excited rather by the tone than the words. Hugh was smarting under an infliction, which he was not, at the moment, unwilling to extend to somebody else, while he was honestly satisfied that his previous experience justified the soundness of his advice.

Mr. Parapet had too much delicacy to remark upon the feeling of his speech, so he merely thanked Hugh, saying he had no doubt but in the majority of instances such a resource would prove invaluable, and he would certainly put it to the proof in case of need, and reminding him that he had promised to afford some counsel in turn, by way of *quid pro quo*.

Hugh's matter was simply this. He had some thoughts, as Mr. Parapet knew, of embarking in political life. Occupation of one sort or another, he considered essential to keep his mind from rusting; and to serve the country seemed as laudable an ambition as could be cherished. He would be happy of any hints which Mr. Parapet's experience might enable him to furnish. Mr. Clyde had been good enough to give him much valuable information; but, on a subject so many-sided, a multitude of counsels begat wisdom. Hugh would be glad of Mr. Parapet's in a general way, and of any details he could supply of the character and uses of Mr. Salathiel Doke in a particular one. The subject was one which Mr. Parapet could discuss *con spirito*, if not *con amore*.

"My dear young friend," he said, feelingly, "who toucheth pitch, shall be defiled. If you can achieve something thereby, whose blessing overtops the curse of defilement, profit may come, although I fail to see it. If to spend your substance for the delectation of an unclean rabble; to breathe an atmosphere flavored of humanity unwashed, onions and bad whiskey; to listen always to foul oaths unreproved, envy and uncharitableness toward all better educated, better dressed. or indeed *different* in any respect from the rabble itself; to sit under the wing of spread eagles barbarously caricatured to suit the taste of that rabble; to serve it for a constituency, with Salathiel Dokes to interpret its lofty behests; if to do these things be desirable, or if the end sanctify the means—for there is but one road, and that no royal one—become a politician.

"If to be drawn gradually but irresistibly into the habit of talking slang instead of English—exaggerated and hybrid fustian instead of pure and simple idiom—the habit of lowering yourself on principle to please the tastes and prejudices of the vulgar; of pretending to be coarse and commonplace, because

he bulk of your audience are so, until the habit becomes second ature, and you sink to the same level—become a politician.

"You heard a politician speak here the other night—a poli- cian who is also an orator. The occasion was a solemn one— ıe death of an eminent public servant and benefactor—and the udience might be considered a select one. I remember the speaker s a youth; and he had the education, if not altogether the man- ers, of a gentleman. But to hear him, even under such circum- ances, was to show what the habit I cite may do in the way of eterioration. What incredible bombast was his speech! How ırgid the diction—how puffed by superfluous and unmeaning djectives! How preposterous the metaphors—learned by rote n an hundred stumps to tickle the ears of the groundlings! low inconclusive and irrelevant was his argument, and how ughably magniloquent and unscholarly the peroration! The peech was just fit for a grog-shop gathering to nominate an rish councilman for the Sixth ward; and yet Mr. —— ranks as ne of the leaders of his party, and, you may depend upon it, s unconscious of his solecisms—his sins against taste and pro- riety. It is in the nature of this disease that its victims are tterly ignorant of its ravages. Tell them it exists, and they will ell you you are a fool. They resent the imputation to the last legree, and are quite sincere in their incredulity; and they are ıot entirely wrong, so far as censure attaches to their malady, since it is the product, not of individuals, but of a system."

With these and more opinions of a similar uncompromising character did Mr. Parapet regale the ears of Gifford; winding up with the, for him, rather extreme statement that he believed Mr. Doke to be one of the most arrant scoundrels who went unhung. Nevertheless, he added, if Hugh were absolutely determined upon entering the thorny paths so deprecated, Doke could be made, beyond doubt, very useful as a tool. He was celebrated as having done the dirty work for divers eminent officials, whilst they were climbing to the dizzy heights they now occupied; and, if unscrupulousness were a virtue, it could not be gainsaid that he possessed that, at least, if no other. He had the ear of many who would dislike to be publicly mentioned in connection with his name; for even Mr. Clyde, who certainly would not associate with him, had employed the man politically. Finally, he might be fitly regarded as a fair specimen of the people whom an aspirant for political honors must make up his mind to see and hear a good deal of; so that, on the whole, Gifford might as well get accustomed to the species in his person as in another's.

All this was more disagreeable to our hero than he cared to acknowledge. Somewhat later in his career, he would not have had to learn that a gentleman of his mentor's order was the last to whom he should apply for an account of the favorable side of political life. He was no more likely to speak well of the existing order of things than an unenfranchised Englishman who sees no chance of rising to the dignity of a ten-pounder. Indeed, the analogy could be carried to very interesting conclusions as regards these twin classes, thus excluded on their respective sides of the Atlantic from all share in the business of the state. Practically, their positions are the same. The highest class in America and the lowest class in England are in the like category of discontented or apathetic exclusion; and, however difficult it may be for philosophers to suggest the remedies, it is easy enough to point out the evils which both systems entail. Neither are compatible with that political utopia which Hugh Gifford, like many embryo statesmen, was fond to dream of; but he might have been wiser than to seek either for sympathy or enthusiastic patriotism in a Parapet—and, happily, in time, he grew to be so.

CHAPTER XII.

Rumor, with her thousand tongues, painted our hero far richer than he was. Unknown in the haunts of trade, or the walks of professional life, and a stranger even in social circles, there was a mystery about his antecedents well calculated to sharpen wonder, and give a zest to speculation. The sponsorship of the Parapets had assured his position, and an expenditure, liberal, yet tasteful, attendant on his taking up a settled residence in the metropolis, did its share in attracting attention and remark. As the news spread abroad of the new Crœsus who had come to dwell among them, the keen-witted, the parasitical, and the grovelling, gathered together to profit by, to fasten to, and to worship him.

Greatly to his surprise—for although he fancied he knew much of the world, Hugh was yet but a young man—he found himself quite overwhelmed with compliments and attentions. The letters from tradespeople; cringing proffers of unlimited credit from disinterested tailors, and saddlers, and jockeys,

were sufficiently explicable, and he was quite old enough to see through them. But the cut flowers on his breakfast-table every morning; the pressing invitations sent daily by sumptuous occupants of palaces; the requests for the honor of his company, and the favor of his patronage, from societies and corporations having some name in the world; the cordial proposals to attend to his Wall street business, free of all expense, by fascinating brokers, who seemed to devote themselves exclusively to such benevolently unrequited labors; the private boxes, mysteriously offered at his shrine by rival managers; the profusion of nods and becks, and wreathed smiles from hosts of fair ones, to whom he had barely been presented; and, finally, the outrageous puffs of his person, carriage, horses, mansion, and everything that was his, which, to his confusion, appeared one morning in the *Optimist*, were not so readily seen through or appreciated.

"He's a millionaire!" whispered Mr. Doke into the greedy ears of the Sachems of Gammony; and "He's a millionaire!" echoed in joyful unison through the ancient wigwam where they sat in council. "But," added Salathiel, darkly, "no capers, mind! I'm a workin' of him, I am; and I'll cook any duck that comes between me and my game before killin' time." And Sachems, preferring, as a rule, to cook, rather than be cooked, grimly awaited the event, with the consolatory hope of sharing in the feast when it should be served.

"He's a millionaire!" muttered Gollop, the famous speculator, of the heavy firm of Ingott and Gollop, and, as he himself said in the way of boast, one of Mr. Clyde's right-hand men in great political enterprises. "Wonder how much I could get him to take of the Great Consolidated Horse Railway! Wonder how much he's really worth any how! Wonder what's his bait: politics, gals, hosses, or buildin'!" For Gollop was religiously persuaded that every man on earth had, what he termed, his "bait;" which, like the shining fly to a trout, or toasted cheese to a mouse, was certain, sooner or later, to lure him to his ruin.

"He's a millionaire!" murmured Mrs. Cranstoun, with the marriageable daughter, who, after a poor season or so more, would be no longer marriageable. "Heavens! if he would only take a fancy to dear Julia! Surely she doesn't look more than eight-and-twenty by gas-light; and they say he's so sensible and well read, perferring sound, good sense, and solid domestic virtues to mere prettiness. Ah, me! If I could only see those giggling girls, who call her a skinny old maid, turn green with envy as she dashed by in that love of a coupé, to

that sweet house of his with the brown stone caryatides, I do believe I could die in peace! But how to manage it, oh! how to manage it!"

"He's a millionaire!" pondered Mr. Clyde, as he flew by the Erie Railway into the heart of the Sate, and made little entries and calculations on the tablets he habitually carried. "If I put him in by-and-by for one of the River Counties, bringing him forward, as he develops, into the line of promotion; what, with his brain and that conscientiousness which is sure to keep him grateful, I might—hum—well, we'll see."

"He's a millionaire!" breathed the reverential rabble, as the Gifford coupé dashed up Broadway, while the hotel loafers, the actors lounging about the doors of theatres, and the red-eyed gamblers looked after it with desire. "Brought back five hundred thousand dollars in sacks of gold dust from California, and doubled it in Wall Street the week after." "One of the ablest young men in our great country, sir. Made the tour of Europe in six weeks, at an expense of six thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars a week, not countin' drinks." "Don't chew none, but smokes like sin. Half the gals on Fifth Avenue are fightin' for him." "Sphinx is a paintin' of him, as a Roman emperor with a wreath of laurel on." "Gollop and him are going into partnership to buy Staten Island, and turn it into Cremorne Gardens." "Is that so?" "Yer lie!" "Shaver told me, anyhow. Only Live Oak George and old Corneel Gingergilt fit as to who should hev the lion's share." "Git aout." "Them hosses cost one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four dollars and sixty-eight cents." "Show!" "Jube Cinnamon told me, and he had 'em a week on the Centreville course, slickin' up for market. He says this here ghost's income is five hundred dollars a day!" "Gas! I don't swaller that." "Bill Astor, and sech, chalk a heap higher 'n that!" "Yes; and how long was old John Jacob a-makin' of it?" "No one ever heerd o' this man afore. I b'lieve he's some skunk of a lord playin' possum on the upper ten! Stuck up lookin' cuss anyhow."

Gifford would have been more than man had he remained utterly insensible to the incense which was perpetually burning below and around him. It is not singular that he grew to mistake some of the adulation which his reputed wealth commanded for genuine appreciation of his personal qualities. Alas! Which of us are so strong as to be sure that, similarly circumstanced, we should be more clear-headed? Let those who are doubtful on this point, seek the confidence, if they can get it, of some one who has suddenly acquired wealth, and is now so fortunate as to

be able to look back calmly and measure its immediate effects and consequences.

Little by little the aspirations for greatness, for usefulness to his fellow-men, which had formerly been clear, strong, and sharply defined in Hugh's mind, became confused, weak, and blurred. Why should one who was so much respected and esteemed labor to *win* respect and esteem? Why run races when the goal is already won? True, the ignorant people he had formerly associated with did not reverence him so highly as the more clear-sighted community he now lived among; but that was their lack of education and consequent appreciation, poor things. It could not be expected that such as they could comprehend the exceptional merits of an uncommon character—understand the value of attainments to which they were utter strangers.

But there was Marian—she surely could understand and appreciate him—there could be no doubt of *her* capacity; and yet a little while ago she had censured him; and more than once since, she had gently implied dissatisfaction with the course he was pursuing. She thought it very different, this life of festivity, pride, and indulgence, from the ideal life of progressive usefulness and resolutely developed faculties she had sketched out for him of old, at Armstrong's Bar; and she said so. This contrast between the admiration, the felicitations of others, and Marian's quiet, thoughtful disapproval, jarred on Gifford's self-esteem; and at almost that very time when he was wild with joy at having found her—the time when the acme of human happiness, as he once esteemed it, was within his reach—he was weak enough to feel pained by the noble girl's frank sincerity, and to foster an estrangement which was the merest offspring of vanity.

This grew not up in a day. Its growth was slow, sinister, and gradual. The old love was too strong to be readily shaken, and there were many occasions when it swept through Hugh's heart with all its wonted power, overthrowing and putting to flight all meaner thoughts, or unworthy jealousies which stood in its way. But the miserable effect of his wealth was ever present. When he left Marian, who told him he was a weak, erring mortal, with good capacities, but much to achieve, he went forth to meet a crowd of worshippers, who hailed him as a demigod, and filled his path with flowers of praise and his ears with poems of admiration. And then, alas! for the tender monitress who, self-abnegatory as she was, thought only of her lover's good, thus contending with the merciless worldlings who thought only of their own.

One morning Gifford received two letters which brought many

an old memory up before him, which made him think of his childhood, of his boyhood, of his earlier manhood, its struggles, its temptations, its romantic success; more than all, it recalled the hours passed at Armstrong's Bar with her who had won his heart there. But the letters shall speak for themselves.

DR. DAVID LANDALE TO HUGH GIFFORD.

"Armstrong's Bar, Oct. 14th, 1852.

"I am just back here taking a look at the old place before coming east. Lion's Dale has been the making of our pockets; but it's a wild, uncouth place, compared with this. There is quite a village here now—shops with painted signs; a big hotel with Corinthian columns (cut out in profile of deal boards); two billiard-rooms, and twenty-three new houses. Also seven flumes running to the Cañon and pumping the poor old stream nearly dry in hot weather. And the old shanty still stands, with a wooden roof instead of a cotton one, and "Post Office" in gilt letters just under the eaves. Of course there are many more folks here than of yore; but it's not a bit pleasanter for all that.

"The solitude that used to be so soothing and grateful; the woods so silent, and the banks of the streams and tarns where we wandered like chiefs who had shut out all the world beside; the pretty spots where we used to idle away the leisure, scheming what we'd all do when we got rich; all these are made common and vulgar now by the coarse crowd who see beauty only where gold is, and leave traces wherever they go enough to scare away the fairies forever. You'll remember the bit of a lake among the hills where Luke made the seat after the lassie left? I was there yesterday; and the green sod was crushed with heavy feet, and strewn with broken whiskey bottles and pipes, and fragments of tin cans and old bones. It's well we're all gone or going, for the spot will never again be the spot that it was.

"Well, you'd like to know how we've fared. Briefly, then, we have about fifty thousand each to his share; and by staying a couple of years more might have the double of it. But for me, I am weary of the life. There are things dearer in the world than gold getting; and time rolls on and on without making me younger. For one who's neither kith nor kin, ten thousand pounds may keep the wolf from the door, and something better; so that I've no fears on that score, and am ready

to cry content while yet free of fever or ague to poison the days to come.

"The old people are well and cheerful. Having got on so well, they are now heart-set for the old family place, a farm where Seth was born, not far from New York on the banks of the Connecticut. And pretty Kitty has made up her mind to be Mrs. Railes—she has put it off once or twice—after they get home, she says, and have time to turn round. As to Dick, he worships the ground she treads on. I don't think he ever thought so much of any creature or thing on earth—except the theodolite—and I believe he says his prayers to that every morning.

"For Luke, he is more studious and quiet-like than ever. He's always done his share of the work and more; but he's done something else besides. He's taught himself a good bit of the Latin grammar, and with a word from me now and then, is well on with the mathematics. I've taught him the principles of plane surveying and levelling, and he's quite up to trigonometry and the use of logarithms. Last time I went to San Francisco I bought him a Legendre, by way of Euclid, you know, and a Bourdon's algebra; so that you'll guess he's improving his mind.

"And when I was at the town—a wonderfully different town from what you saw it—I heard somewhat of other friends of ours. Mr. Sloper has become enormously rich, and is soon to return to the Atlantic States. He made ten thousand dollars out of the great fire; and it is said, has doubled it about once a month ever since. Judge Skewer killed two men in a gambling row, making five homicides he has committed in all, and had to fly to the mountains, where he is now reputed to be concealed. Of the two other gentlemen who dined with us at the Café Lafayette, Mr. Gallus was hung last summer by the Vigilance Committee, and Mr. McCracken is Mayor of Sonora.

"Mr. Du Solle, the Southerner, whom we saw leave so much at the gaming house, lost two hundred thousand dollars shortly afterwards, and blew his brains out one fine morning at his lodgings in the Occidental Hotel. What is very singular is, that I happened to sleep at the hotel that night, and was summoned, as the nearest surgeon at hand, to see the man. For a few moments I was alone with the body, and I found in an inner pocket of his waistcoat next his heart a very striking miniature of Miss Marian Rooke. There could be no mistake, for the likeness was too life-like. It struck me that, considering all things, as a friend of the young lady, I was justified in taking

this picture; and I have kept it by me without mention to any one, to return to herself when I see her.

"If it had not been for the barking of Lion hard by, just now, I do believe I should have been thoughtless enough not to name him or his master. They are both well; but do you know I think both Ike and the dog took your going very much to heart. It was many a day after that they went spooking about as if to find you in some out of the way place, the dog smelling and the man peering; however, they're both greatly creatures of habit, and are getting to be much the same as ever. They will be brought home to the East by the Armstrongs, and may be the new change will do the poor laddie some good.

"I might write many more details, but then I'd have nothing to interest you when we meet at New York, which, at my present thinking, may be in three months' time; that is, provided you're not away when we arrive. So I'll just close this with wishing you a continuance of the health you always had, and of the fortune begun at Lion's Dale.

"DAVID LANDALE.

"P. S,—They all tell me to put in their good wishes, and hope soon to see you, and that you have seen 'Mary Anne.' And if I were you, having leisure in abundance, I'd try to unearth and bring to grief that never-to-be-sufficiently-execrated, and yet most facetious scoundrel—'Colonel' Pangburn."

JOHN CHESTER TO HUGH GIFFORD.

"Court Street, Boston, Nov. 15th.

"My dear friend Hugh,—What a world this is! Only three days ago I heard from an old and attached acquaintance of yours of your great—although I am sure *deserved*—good fortune; that you were living in style at New York, keeping your carriage, and holding your head as high as the best. How time flies! It seems only yesterday since you and I were clerks together in Old Tarbox's office, where we were such dear old friends—were we not, Hugh?—and laid the foundations of that friendship which, I trust, is to last always.

"It is pleasant, dear friend, as the months come round and we feel ourselves going further and further from boyhood, to feel that we still preserve some of boyhood's friendships to aid each other in lightening the burthen of life and to console each other under its afflictions. Watching your course, as I have ever *done*, with the solicitude—shall I say of a brother?—natural to the

umstances; for although Gaycow supplanted you with Vir-
ia he never could fill your place with *me*—with the solicitude,
n, of a brother, I need not say how delighted I am by the
sperity which you have attained, and which will enable you
arry out what was always your prime desire—the diffusion
appiness among those around you.

'The news of your good fortune has spread rapidly among
r friends here, and all are anxious to see and congratulate
. They appear to be surprised that you should not settle in
ston instead of New York, as, of course, there cannot be a
parison between the two cities in point of society and cul-
, and they would have thought the memory of the happy
rs you have spent in old Trimountain—to say nothing of the
des of Harvard—would have led you to turn with yearning
he scenes of your childhood. But I tell them it is wrong to
ge you without a hearing, and that it is quite improbable so
dent and sensible a man as Hugh Gifford has ever been, would
in this or any other matter without due reflection and suffi-
nt cause.

'Father was here yesterday, well and hearty. I have just
n conducting a little suit of his against the Pennifeathers, the
l result of an old standing quarrel about metes and bounds,
farms you know being contiguous. He says Canaan is over-
ding itself, trying to compete with the new houses of the
cows and Cuticle Flips. When I told him of your great
ession of riches and honors, father's face fell a little; not, you
do him the justice to believe, that he was sorry for your
sperity, but because he thought perhaps of how good a
nce had been missed by Virginia. Ah, Hugh! we must make
wances for these little weaknesses. Perhaps it is true that
generation which is passing away was over fond of money,
r ready to sacrifice all else to its acquisition; and there may
e been, probably were, excuses for them. It is not because
of the generation of to-day have outlived that particular
kness or defect of money-worship, that we are to hold our-
es without sin. It should rather teach us humility; teach us
r by increased kindness and lenity, and consideration for the
rests and feelings of others, we may at once mitigate the
ts of our brethren and palliate our own.

'Business is good. My own prospects I consider to be sub-
ntial and improving. They are putting up a great number of
new houses at the South End, and I think of buying. I
p a sharp lookout on the registry of mortgages, knowing
when so much is borrowed to put in bricks and mortar,

sooner than the legitimate increase of population warrants it somebody must sacrifice. They have repainted the State Hou and the dome looks quite a different object, provoking mu remark. I should like some more New York business than have, and will not apologize (knowing you would laugh at th for enclosing the names of some firms of your city whose busine here I would like to get.

"Do write me all the particulars of your wonderful succe as to how it came about, and so on. If you could run on he although only for a day, I am certain you would enjoy it mu and your friends would receive you with open arms. It wo have quite touched you to hear how some of the dear old ch at Cambridge took the news of your rise in the world—it wou indeed. But I am sure, dear Hugh, that none could rejoi more heartily in so happy a circumstance than does

"Your affectionate old friend,

"JOHN CHESTER.

"P. S. Pray write soon, as I am most anxious to hear fro you; would come on, if not so very busy."

"Talk of fame!" said Mr. Doke, exultingly; "look at th air!" And Hugh looked at that air; and, to do him justic blushed very deeply in so doing. He was not so far gone as t be unable to see the absurdity of the thing; but how could h help it? How could he possibly tell that that eccentric geni Sphinx, would not only have finished his portrait in time, b would have it hanging in that barefaced way on the walls of th Academy the first day it opened its doors?

Hugh had been cajoled into sitting, not so much out of vani as good nature; and not as a Roman emperor, but as that scarc ly less-abused individual—"a gentleman." He met Sphinx Wirt Pinckney's, and had been somewhat puzzled and emb rassed by the great artist staring fixedly at him in what h thought a rather ironical manner for a long time, and just as h began to think of asking him what he meant, bursting into very audible aside to his next neighbor of, "What a magni cent head!"

"You must sit to Sphinx," said Wirt Pinckney, a little whi after.

"I? What for?"

"Oh, everybody does, just now; that is, everybody who c get him. He's very cranky—a genius you know—and wo paint people he doesn't fancy. He's struck by you, and will t great pains, so you must sit to him by all means."

e's the fashion," said Edith Parapet, to whom our hero re-
the point, "so, of course, for the moment, is perfection.
painted by him is to gain distinction, of a certain sort. It
t suit *us*, but——"
ord knew very well how to fill up the sentence. Eldon
filled it up in a different manner. "There is no more ef-
way," he affirmed, "of being well advertised, at a small
se, and without too pointed an ostentation. Very few, com-
ely, go to the Academy, but all read the papers; and the
that know least about painting always print most about
d of course they are the ones that reach the masses. By
ans let Sphinx paint you; he'll make you a great man be-
ou know it."
Sphinx painted him. The artist was fond of working by
ses. He liked to dawdle over his work for weeks and
s as a rule, but now and then he would produce a picture
eally astonishing celerity. Gifford was very much talked
just then, and it was quite in the painter's way to finish
his express-train style, and drive him into the Exhibition.
ere was Hugh on the walls, and on the line, rather too hasty,
too Byronic and Corsairish, but still making a very effec-
icture, undeniably like, and incontestably handsome. And
was a rapt and admiring crowd, chiefly of ladies, ex-
ng and rustling and buzzing before it. And there was Mr.
iel Doke, like a low-living Mephistopheles as he was, doing
most to excite and pander to the lowest passions of Hugh's
. According to him, there was something signally meri-
s in having a slightly-flattered effigy hung up in this manner
public eye, a *prima facie* evidence which, like certain foreign
, was to be accepted as token irrefragable of desert. It was
tward and visible sign of what Doke, and all such as Doke,
dutifully worship—success; the why and wherefore had
re interest to him than the coral insects would have after
ad once piled up what he would call the real estate which
owered ostentatiously above the level of the sea.
alk of fame!" repeated Mr. Doke, while the Vyses, and
mitys, and the Slammerhorns, and the Cranstouns, and the
geable daughters, and the manœuvring mammas, stumbled
one another, and tore out each other's gathers, in the in-
y of the anxiety to get near the costly image.—"Look at
ir!"
at a galaxy of worthies! There was the general officer in
iform, sword on one side, and what should be yardstick on
ther; there was the last mayor, who made more money

while in office than any even of his most indefatigable predecessors; there was old Dimity himself, looking sublimely conscious of the regal qualities of cotton and his ministers; there was the great statesman, Doephase, who had taught the Northern people those sublime strokes of wisdom and policy whereby they had preserved their quiet and their dollars at the cheap cost of their political morality and their manhood; there was Prodder—in an obscure corner by the way—with a torn shirt collar, and his hair on end, as if the artist had surprised him just after the application of some stimulating unguent; there was Rullock, the great shipbuilder, who, to his honor, had grown to be what he was from a poor dock-laborer; and there were divers military and naval heroes, who happily gave their professions the benefit of their undivided talents; together with a great variety of other worthies and notables, male and female, native and foreign.

But none of these, however eminent or deserving, attracted the attention bestowed upon our young Crœsus. They were hopeless, and dried up as sources of favor or profit, while he was budding with the promise of auriferous benefits to come.

"Dear Mr. Blobb," said Mrs. Cranstoun, "as you gentlemen of the press know everything—and make such a good use of your time in spreading it—do tell me how *did* he make his money?"

"In strict secrecy, then, dearest Madam——"

"In strict secrecy, of course."

"He found some of Blackbeard's treasure concealed on one of the guano islands of the Spanish Main."

"Bless my heart, how romantic!"

"And among a heap of old parchments—fortunately preserved in a steel skull-cap worn by the pirate chief—he discovered a clue to the secret of Captain Kidd's buried wealth, which, as you know, has always been supposed to be hidden somewhere on the coast of New Jersey."

"And he found that, too?"

"Yes; by excavating to the depth of nearly a hundred feet at Long Branch—having first purchased the farm where he knew the property lay concealed."

"How very extraordinary!"

"Is it not? But they say this is nothing to what he's made, since he came to New York, in stocks."

"Quite a Monte Cristo, is he not? But dear Julia thinks him the very ideal of Byron's Conrad!"

"I'm sure Miss Julia herself is more like Medora! So delicate, so *spirituelle* as she is."

"Oh, Mr. Blobb!"

"I hadn't the remotest idea," explained Gifford to Clinton Parapet, "that the wretched thing would be here, or I wouldn't have come."

"Tut, what does it matter? It helps Sphinx, who, his affectations aside, is a very good fellow, and does you no harm. Look at that sketch of Millais. It seems absolutely surprised to find itself in such odd company."

"I've got some chiny things," observed Mr. Doke, "screens and things, that look like that."

"Oh, indeed! Then I advise you to get them hung in the Exhibition. The more the better of that sort. Come, Gifford, I want to show you something grand from a hand less known."

The two young men strolled into another room, and stood before a very large painting, representing "The Heart of the Continent." Hugh gazed at the picture for a long time, and sighed.

"You seem struck by it?" said Clinton.

"Yes; the scenery, the coloring, are very familiar to me."

"Indeed? I thought it ideal, with correct details, of course."

"I think not. No idea of an artist could equal what he would find ready-made to his hand, and no one could paint that coloring who had not seen it."

"I perceive. Whoever had been on the spot would have no need to draw on his invention. Excuse me a moment, I want to say a civil word to old Dimity."

Marian was to meet Hugh at the gallery, and in a few moments she was standing beside him. "I had some trouble in getting through the next room," she observed, significantly.

Hugh blushed again, and to the eyes. "It was quite without my assent, without my knowledge."

"I'm glad of that; not that there's any real harm that I know of, only it seemed unlike you."

"Unlike me," mused Hugh, as he took a rose-bud from his coat and offered it to Marian; "I suppose you mean, unlike as I was there," he added, pointing to the picture.

Marian uttered an exclamation of surprise. "Why, it is the place, the very spot!"

"You recognize it, then?"

"Indeed I do. These hills; the little stream as it wound down the ravines between them; the bold, distant mountains. I can even see the knot of trees where Luke and Ike and Lion awaited us before we crossed the stream; and, this—this surely is the site of our camp."

"It is very like it, certainly," said Hugh, smiling, "but I suppose there are many similar spots."

"It is the same," said Marian, her eyes riveted to the painting, "always the same, will ever be so. Unlike ourselves nature remains what she has been, now and for ever."

"Do you think we change so much, then?" questioned the young man in a low voice.

"Ask yourself, Hugh; are you now quite what you were when you stood there?"

"No; I am richer, older."

"Happier?"

"I ought to be, as you may fairly witness."

"Would—would that we were there again!"

"What! so poor, so environed by dangers, so hopeless!"

"Do not say 'so hopeless.' For the world was all before us to ourselves the censure, if we chose not well. As for poverty we lived and were happy; and, for dangers, what matter since heaven gave us strength and courage to surmount them? Ah Hugh! is this crowded, jostling world, with its hypocrisy, its parasites, and its gold-worship, so much better than the free open prairie, where man can grow as God made him, without the warps and stunts and deformities which come of over-crowding; so that each is trying to overreach, or overshadow, or draw sustenance from his neighbor? Is your life the happier for a society whose only measure of any man's merits corresponds with its estimate of the length of his purse? Do you really feel, standing as we do face to face with those glorious plains that existence in a stifling city is so much better, so much nobler as to lead you to adopt it as of a permanent choice?"

"If you dislike the town, dearest Marian, in good time we'll forsake and turn our backs upon it. Our friends are coming home from Armstrong's Bar, and we can again join their little circle. We will search out some charming rural home, where the evils of this surging city shall never be seen or heard of, where Lion and Ike, and those simple-minded Armstrongs shall be our companions, in place of the fashionables you have grown so weary of; where you can imagine yourself to be once more on the boundless plains; where——"

"I beg yer parding, I'm sure," interrupted Doke, bustling up and apologizing to Marian with an awkward bow, "but really must interdoose you to Colonel Ingott—the great firm you know, Ingott and Gollop. One o' the Sachems, you know," he added, to Gifford, in a lower key, "one of our great pillars he is—wuth a million if he is a cent. He kin do more'n most

any one 'cept Clyde to put ye through. He's been blowin' to Sphinx 'bout your pictur. He's goin' to sit to him himself as Atlas or somethink. Here he is, now. Colonel Ingott, have I the pleasure? Allow me! This is Mr. Gifford, the risin' *millionaire!* It really makes me feel good to interdoose you two gentlemen, I'm sure!"

Pending the salutations, a long train of Colonel Ingott's followers completely encircled the group, and our hero found himself, in a few moments, presented to an imposing array of politicians, officials, and other dignitaries. It was not a place of customary resort with them, but Doke had managed an impromptu gathering, to give éclat and amplitude to the report which would appear in to-morrow's papers of Sphinx's *chef d'œuvre*—the portrait of the future political candidate. The latter was quickly the cynosure of an admiring band, at whose approach Marian stole away like a nymph from the advent of so many satyrs. Truly, Gifford's prospects were waxing brighter and brighter. What with the substantial weight of his gold, and the judicious ministerings of Doke and his creatures—what with the pencil of Sphinx, and the drums and hautboys of rival mammas, he was fast rising into celebrity, if he did not altogether promise—as Eldon Clyde suggested—to become a great man before he knew it.

CHAPTER XIII.

Gold is a subtle and insidious destroyer of good resolutions. Dangerous under the most favorable circumstances, it is especially so when it comes as the product of unexpected fortune rather than as that of accumulating and patient toil. Our hero was quite right when he thought himself for many reasons unsuited to the peculiar social atmosphere in which his boyhood had been passed; but he was decidedly wrong when he thought, as he often did, that, because he could appreciate and despise the vulgar deference paid to money—the sordid uses to which it was put—he could, therefore, in the event of growing suddenly rich, become a model of self-command and beneficial dispensation.

How he had longed for gold! What images had he conjured up of the good he would do with it, of how it should be the stepping-stone to his own moral and intellectual development, of

how he would set an example to its grovelling worshippers, and teach them that man should be its master and not its slave. And yet now, surrounded by pretty women, by cunning speculators, by social drones, ever ready to batten on others' hives; led to credit by sheer force of iteration that he really must be a very remarkable person, and one to be looked up to, else wherefore had he grown to be what he was?—fêted and courted, and invited to a degree which would have been wearisome had it not been so very flattering—our hero began to grow sadly like the pattern of Crœsus he had once thought so contemptible, to drink in for daily excitement the species of incense he had once so much despised.

The tone of his moral nature began to be vitiated. The studies in constitutional law, political economy, and the like, which he had laid out for himself when he should once settle in New York, were first slighted, then postponed, finally thrust out of mind altogether and thought of no more. What need of all those things when people were constantly assuring him that he was so very clever? Especially what need when a contrast with Doke and his fellows assured him that such knowledge was at all events not necessary to a considerable degree of political success? If he had been poor and friendless, these attainments might be well enough as weapons to fight his way through the throng; but if the throng were ready to concede him a foremost place, merely on seeing the color of his money, why waste strength in conquering them otherwise?

Dearly as he loved Marian, too, the force of circumstances tended to weaken the influence for good which she possessed over him. Long ago, when in a different frame of mind, he would have comprehended and admired the delicacy of her motives in deferring the period of their union. But now, environed by flatterers and sycophants who cultivated the idea that his slightest desires ought properly to be met by instant gratification, he reasoned himself into a half belief that those motives were based on a foundation as ignoble as mere caprice. They saw much of each other; but after a time he found it somewhat irritating when Marian questioned him as to the progress of his studies, the intended line of his political pursuits, or otherwise reminded him that the life they had both contemplated as being that of his future was one of useful activity and not of luxurious sloth. Such irritation was slightly felt at first. It increased by slow and insensible degrees. It had grown to grave proportions almost before Gifford knew he

had felt it at all. And, by a sad fatality, it tended more and more to coolness and constraint as he grew richer.

For he was day by day growing richer. Persuaded that he had a talent for speculation, and craving an excitement which balls, and parties, and operas, and theatres could not entirely supply, he had gone into Wall Street, and by some of those inexplicable turns of luck which occasionally attend the wildest and most ignorant ventures, he had in a few weeks nearly doubled his fortune. All he touched turned to gold; and the elation born of this fresh success did not increase his humility.

People began to come to him for the use of his name to print in lists of committees, corporations, and public meetings. "We don't wish you to subscribe, Mr. Gifford; not even to trouble yourself to be present: we only solicit the use of your name."

His name! Only the use of his name! The name which a few little months ago was that of a poor, unknown wanderer, whose very connections would gladly forget that it existed, was now a spell—a talisman—to enlist the confidence of the world and command its respect.

"You ain't a common kind of man, Mr. Gifford," quoth the delicate and scrupulous Doke. "You ain't no common man—you're an INSTITUTION!" And Hugh actually began to believe that he was one.

Presently there appeared in the columns of the daily newspapers detailed accounts of his establishment, his horses, his income and whence it came, with all the embellishments and piquant exaggerations wherewith it is the custom of those fastidious prints to regale their fastidious readers. "Nothin' like it," exulted Doke, "for makin' a man *kncwn*. Yer chance is twice as good on a ticket when yer name's buzzed round amongst the folks, especially when it's tacked on to accounts of things that costs so much money."

Gifford soon found himself hand and glove with various great men, speculators, capitalists, stock company makers, and political sachems. Among the latter was that eminent man, Demosthenes Ingott, the senior partner of the firm of Ingott and Gollop. He was a person of better education and more cultivated address than Gollop; the latter being chiefly efficient as a very hard-headed, practical, and determined man, who could and would manage and control the lower order of politicians, with whom the firm had heavy dealings. For Ingott and Gollop were large contractors and indefatigable schemers; and it was perpetually necessary for them to "work" legislative and other pure-minded and clean-handed public servants in the furtherance of their

schemes. Mr. Ingott was the aristocratic, Mr. Gollop the democratic member. One pulled the wires which made rich men, influential men, the puppets of the higher circles, dance; the other, those which controlled the vicious, the low, and consequently the numerous.

On the first day that Mr. Ingott made our hero's acquaintance he proposed to him a share in a little speculation whereby Gifford found himself, to his astonishment, a thousand dollars the richer in less than a week. Ingott was always helping his friends to make money quickly, and always wanting to be paid in kind. Afterwards they had various confidential transactions; but they were nearly all of a character which worked to Hugh's profit; and he very reasonably congratulated himself on having met so sagacious and good-natured an adviser in his monetary affairs. Mr. Ingott's political connection was exceedingly powerful, and Gifford soon found that by pleasing him he could in all likelihood succeed in attaining almost any position to which in reason he might aspire.

This view was fully indorsed by Eldon Clyde, of whom our hero took an early opportunity of making a confidant.

"Ingott," said he, "is one of the smartest men in America. People talk against him, it is true: success always invites calumny. I've found him fair-dealing enough. However, it's only right to say that he would not dare attempt to overreach me; so that I may not be the best judge. He is very rich. That's beyond question. As to Gollop, he's a coarse, illiterate fellow; but highly useful to Ingott, and completely under his thumb. Doke is an infernal rascal, and can do everything he says he can. He certainly seems a rough customer, but he has the ear of influential men, and they'll go far to carry out his plans. When fifty thousand people have votes which they cast without having intelligence enough to know what for, middle-men like Doke become political necessities. Only one caution I'd give you, and that is not to trust him with too much money. As to running for office, the time is unfavorable just at present to prepare for such a thing. I recommend you to study the board carefully, and to wait a few months, when I can be of some service to you myself."

Thus encouraged, Hugh had no hesitation in embarking in other of Ingott's schemes of a larger character, and was equally prosperous in all, for the man's cunning was of no ordinary kind. His whole soul was wrapped up in the pursuit of dollars, and he had lived fifty years in the chase; so that long experience whetted his natural instincts to an almost unerring certainty in the

vertaking of his game. Why he should admit others to share a spoil which he might easily monopolize, was not very apparent. But this belonged to a class of considerations which participants in spoil are very ready to overlook. So Hugh waxed richer and richer, and troubled himself not at all with Mr. Ingott's motives.

Meanwhile he was subjected to temptation of another sort, in the beautiful person and fascinating manners of Edith Parapet. That this aristocratic young lady would have repelled the idea of marrying any person of an unknown or humble family, whether rich or poor, is most true. But she was excessively pleased with Hugh Gifford; and, perhaps, a tacit belief that such a consummation was quite out of the question, made her less cautious than she otherwise would have been. I have said she was handsome, with a tall, exquisitely moulded figure—not like Marian's, there was not one in ten thousand that was—but still uncommonly fine; a delicate aquiline nose, arching brows, coral lips curved like Diana's bow, and hands and feet which were perfect studies.

Yet it was not physical attractions alone which constituted Edith's charm. There was a loftiness in her mien which, without giving the least idea of personal vanity, and so being in that sense offensive, made her condescension marvellously gracious and winning. Her accomplishments were many, and could be judiciously employed; but neither they nor her beautiful person had half the power of her manner—when she chose.

Now, she had been accustomed to find this particular weapon quite irresistible; and it was not strange on coming in contact with the good-looking, unequivocally well-bred, but as unequivocally reserved, Hugh Gifford, that she should in time be tempted to experiment to see if he were really so unimpressionable as he seemed. And Hugh, perceiving those all but imperceptible distinctions, those incipient, half-blown coquetries that a lady of high degree can show to a man of sensitive nature and quick perceptions, without their being in the least observable to the rest of the world, would have been more or less than mortal not to have enjoyed them. It was a sort of flirtation which goes on more frequently among refined people than the world is aware of—far more frequently than the sort which it is much readier to impute, and freer to censure.

There was not a spark of intentional disloyalty to Marian in Hugh's breast. But the flattery of a beautiful and distinguished woman's preference assailed him in his weakest moments. It came upon him when wealth had purchased adultation, and

idleness had encouraged dissipation; when his egotism was puffed by the worthless pæans of the sordid and the vulgar, and his self-respect was belittled by a secret, but ever present, sense of unworthiness—by a sense of being false to a sacred trust, and hiding away his talent in a napkin. Still, he had no—not the least—notion of infidelity. His acquaintance with the family of the Parapets had commenced before he had discovered Marian, and it merely continued afterwards as it had been before. It never occurred to Hugh—at least not for a long time—that the pleasure he found in the society of Edith was in any degree purchased at the expense of his duty to Marian.

Unhappily, both Edith and Gifford had qualities which were very much admired in an æsthetic sense by the other. They loved to linger near one another, as one lingers near a fine picture or piece of sculpture, and with as little sense of being harmed thereby. But the harm was there, nevertheless, and threatened to break forth by-and-by to the misery of all concerned.

The pair were seen together at the opera, at concerts, in the park, walking in Fifth Avenue, or in other fashionable resorts. They were seen too often to escape comment, and after a while the world began to draw its inferences. However, Mrs. Parapet was so generally present upon these occasions, and the Parapets were, as a rule, so studious to avoid being conspicuous, that remark was not so swift in spreading through the community as it might otherwise have been.

Pending such inauspicious rumors, there was one day convened a solemn conclave in the Wall Street office of Messrs. Ingott and Gollop. Mr. Salathiel Doke was present, and joined in the deliberations. The meeting lasted for an hour or more, and broke up with the emphatic statement of Mr. Gollop, confidently expressed, after hearing all the others had to say on the subject under discussion, "You kin bet yer life that to be a Congressman's his bait!"

In the afternoon, Mr. Ingott waited upon Gifford at his house, and unfolded the fact that he was going to confer upon that gentleman a greater proof of his goodwill than ever before: that is to say, it was open to him to accept or not; but he should have the opportunity of electing. The truth was, that Ingott and Gollop had just entered into a gigantic contract with the State Government, which was absolutely certain to clear for the contractors a profit of no less than five millions of dollars in less than two years. One-eighth of this enterprise Messrs. Ingott and Gollop were willing to allot to Hugh on so simple a con-

lition that it amounted to a positive gift. This was merely the filling of a bond in the extent of $250,000, which was one-quarter of the security they were obliged to give. The sum was large, but it would be no inconvenience, since the authorities would accept Gifford's bond without any transfer or tying-up of property; and if he objected, it was all the same, as Mr. Ingott's only wish was to do his friend a great service. Moreover, his connection with the affair would be a material advantage in respect to his political prospects.

A man who had made his fortune by hard work, or who had not doubled it when made by preposterous luck, would have hesitated over this proposition, and declined it. Not so our hero, who only saw in the scheme a fresh stride, whereby he was to become four times as rich as when he came to the great city. Twenty-four hours later saw him become, practically speaking, a silent partner in the house of Ingott and Gollop, entitled to one-eighth of their profits—responsible for one-eighth of their losses. If he had only been wise enough to put his eggs in different baskets! But it is not alone "The wisdom of the Giaour" which "cometh after the catastrophe!"

CHAPTER XIV.

"My dear Edith," said Mrs. Parapet, as they rolled in their stately carriage through the wide avenues of the Park, "what—now that you have had such good opportunities for judging—what do you think of Mr. Gifford?"

"Think of him?"

"Do you think him clear-sighted, discreet, sagacious—or should you esteem him obtuse, frivolous, conceited?"

"Good heavens! Dear mamma, are you jesting? Surely you cannot for an instant suppose that any one could apply these latter epithets to Hugh Gifford?"

"But the former?"

"Most persons, I should say, would credit him for having an uncommonly good head for his years. But really one can scarcely tell. Men are so deceptive; and I have seen so very little of him——"

"Little of him! Let me see; he came from Europe, I think, some time in September. It is now past the holidays, although,

with so little snow, it certainly seems incredible. After buying his house, he spent a few weeks in travel. Since his return, there may have been many days when he has not been at the house, but I cannot recall more than half-a-dozen!"

"He has been much with Clinton," said Miss Parapet, playing with the tassel of her parasol with a delicately gloved hand, "and, doubtless, has been in the house very frequently when I have not seen him."

"Your papa is much pleased with his report *apropos* of little Dimity. He thinks Clinton is only amusing himself after all. Dangerous sport, perhaps! But better so than to be frightfully in earnest."

"Unquestionably!"

"Nothing could be so dreadful as for him to compromise himself in such a manner. Of course they're very rich; but what are riches in our eyes?"

A responsive curl wreathed the aristocratic lips of Edith, which was observed by her mamma with anxious satisfaction.

"You quite agree, my love, that no considerations of money could, or should, reconcile us to what would be otherwise a *mesalliance*?"

"Most certainly."

"Ah, Edith, I am so glad to hear you say so."

Edith looked surprised. "Did you ever hear me express myself otherwise?"

"Not in terms, my dear, assuredly."

"By implication, then?"

"It is not quite easy to answer that question."

"Not quite easy?"

"Since different constructions may more readily be put upon actions, in such matters, than upon words."

"Positively, mamma, you're quite like a Delphic prophetess to-day. I really wish you'd think proper to explain yourself!"

They had passed Gifford and Clinton Parapet a few minutes before, and the manner in which Edith had received the former's profound salutation had been the cue to the mother's discourse. Hugh was looking remarkably handsome, and his bow had brought a peculiar carnation to the cheek of the proud girl beside her, which a score of obeisances from as many different cavaliers, since their carriage entered the Park, had collectively failed to produce. It was natural that Mrs. Parapet's anixety should threaten to get the better of her prudence when she thus marked the outward and visible sign of what she had, for some

weeks, with maternal apprehension, suspected; natural even that it should make her indifferent for the time to the admiration freely bestowed on the Parapet vehicle from a hundred rolling equipages as they flashed by; admiration of which the mamma received her full share as she sat there wrapped in costly furs, and looking infinitely more like Edith's sister than her parent.

"My confidence in my dear Edith's tact," said the lady, after a diplomatic pause, "her discretion, and, above all, in her just regard for the family position and name, have been so implicit that I feel I ought to apologize—even to a child—before alluding to what might appear to be a temporary forgetfulness of either."

"I am quite at a loss, dear mamma," returned Edith, in the impenetrable manner she knew so well how to assume, "to apprehend your meaning."

"We were speaking of Clinton, you know, my love, and of our fears lest he should compromise himself, or the family."

"And I understood you to convey the hope that, on the whole, those fears were unfounded."

"So far as your brother is concerned, dear Edith, your papa thinks—that is, Mr. Gifford thinks, and your papa accepts his opinion—that they are quite so."

"Well, dear mamma, as we were quite agreed about the nature of the emergency, quite in accord as to its essentially objectionable character, and quite ready to congratulate each other that the danger is not so imminent as we supposed, I really don't see why you should apologize to me or any one else for so doing!"

A trace of vexation passed over Mrs. Parapet's face, but it passed very quickly, and left behind her most polished smile.

"I am not quite clear," she resumed, after a moment's reflection, "that Clinton and Mr. Gifford have been doing each other much good of late."

"Indeed!"

"At first we were well pleased that so cultivated a young man, one so free from the dissipations young men now-a-days are so apt to indulge in, should be Clinton's associate. But I have a suspicion that of late they have been encouraging each other in wildness rather than in self-restraint."

"We have seen no great proofs of it, surely. New York is so ready to chatter about men without regular employment. It is the vengeance taken by the mass who have no leisure upon the few who have."

"In any case," continued Mrs. Parapet airily, "it can make

no particular difference, since Mr. Gifford's reform, if needed, will be likely to follow swiftly on the heels of his transgression."

"Why so?"

"You haven't heard, then? Do you remember a Mr. Rivingstone, connected with *the* Rivingstones, you know, only he lived many years in the South; an old friend of your papa's, too, by the way——"

"Pray what has Mr. Rivingstone to do with Mr. Gifford, or his affairs?"

"Very much, since the latter gentleman is to marry his ward."

"Mr.—Gifford—marry!"

"Why not? He's eligible, isn't he? Do you know of any lawful bar or impediment? No! Very well then, Mr. Gifford is to marry old Mr. Rivingstone's ward. That Southern girl, the brunette, who was so much admired at the Egremonts; she is our young friend's *fiancee*."

Edith made a great effort, for the occasion called for it. The news came upon her with the suddenness of a thunder clap. No one who might have taken pleasure in being its bearer, through possible suspicion of its being unwelcome, had happened to encounter her since it had been whispered in society, so that the rumor even was absolutely unexpected. Mrs. Parapet leaned quietly back in the seat, surveying Edith's face much as the manager of an electrical machine studies those of his victims when he is turning on the power. The lips grew a little white and tremulous, and the carnation slowly faded away; but the proud sparkle of the eye was there, the sparkle which tells of the effort the will is making to retain the appearance of self-possession.

"I don't believe it," said Edith, quietly.

Her mother smiled. She knew her daughter perfectly, and was watching the processes of her mind with appreciative sagacity.

"Pardon me, my dear child, but there can be no doubt as to the fact. And you will forgive me if I add that I am not sorry for it."

"You mean, of course, on account of his own and of Clinton's habits? So am I if it be true, but how do you know it to be so?"

Her voice was so steady now, her manner so assured, that Mrs. Parapet looked at her just an instant with some alarm.

"Surely you have no reason to know it is otherwise?"

"Not exactly," replied Edith, trying to smile in turn; "yet it is at least improbable that a man of his years should have vis-

ited so frequently in a family and made no mention of a fact so intimately connected with his happiness and his future prospects."

"There are circumstances in which such mention is precisely the last thing to be expected of a man. I only trust Mr. Gifford's reticence is not connected with the worst possible cause for it."

"You continue to puzzle me, dear mamma."

"But if no one complains, I suppose we must of course acquit him. The wedding is not to take place until next autumn, I hear. You do not seem interested in our friend's engagement, my love?"

"I simply disbelieve in its existence."

"As to that, you may be readily convinced. Lewis, Mrs. Cranstoun's carriage is stopping in the square, this side of the Circular Drive. Go to it."

The coachman touched his hat, and Edith turned pale again at the confident tone with which her mother promised corroboration. In a few moments the vehicles were side by side. Mrs. Cranstoun was speaking with some shadowy young ladies, of an uncertain age, in a brougham. The Misses Drierly in fact; people of a respectable but bigoted New England family, famous for their bitter prejudices, their curious egotism, their worship for the head of their family, a *litterateur*, whom they consoled for the indifference of the world by affecting to think him a demi-god, and for their pertinacious efforts to insinuate themselves into society which either was, or which was reputed to be, above that of their own proper degree. The Parapets had no knoweldge of the Drierly sfurther than was implied by the most distant of bows, and had never visited or been visited by them. But, although Mrs. Cranstoun, who knew them better, had said adieu before the Parapet equipage drove up, they made some mysterious excuse for remaining on the other side of her carriage, that even such an indirect evidence of acquaintanceship with the Parapets might not be lost upon the passing world.

"Good morning, my dear Mrs. Cranstoun. I have taken the liberty, perceiving you had stopped, to detain you for a moment to ask for the health of our dear Julia."

"A thousand thanks, dear Mrs. Parapet; you are always kind. She is scarcely as well to-day, although the weather is so fine. She is delicate at best, poor thing. Not like Miss Parapet, who has the strength as well as the bloom of the wild rose."

"Our family are fortunate in point of health, certainly; but it is not always the healthiest who last the longest."

"I dare say, when my dear Julia gets older, she may improve.

Doctor Nott says the constitution is scarcely set before four or five and twenty."

"To be sure. How many people are driving, are there not?"

"A vast number. The weather is uncommonly mild for the season."

"Remarkably so. A friend of ours—Mr. Rivingstone—who has been much in the South, was observing that it is nearly as temperate thus far as a winter at New Orleans. Not a chance for skating yet on the lakes."

"Mr. Rivingstone! I had the pleasure of receiving a call from him a day or two since."

"Indeed. Most amiable and gentlemanly person, is he not? How odd that he should never have married. He is quite without a family."

"Not strictly," said Mrs. Cranstoun, in the pride of superior knowledge; "he lives with a sister, you know."

"Ah, to be sure; I know the sister."

"And then there's his ward," pursued the other lady, in a tone expressive of a conviction that this piece of information, at least, was not held in common; "his ward, from the South, a fine girl, although rather too dark for my taste."

"I saw her at the Egremonts, now you mention it. Beautiful eyes and teeth, has she not?"

"Y-es," admitted Mrs. Cranstoun, grudgingly, for these were neither of them strong points with Julia, poor girl. "But dark, almost like a quadroon. By-the-bye, it's half a secret, but she's engaged to a friend of yours."

"So says rumor; but I think it rather doubtful."

"By no means; I questioned Mr. Rivingstone particularly; and, although he was a little evasive, and said they did not care to give needless publicity to the fact, he admitted definitely that it was one."

"Ah, that puts it beyond question, I suppose."

"Entirely. He's so very scrupulous; so cautious a person is Mr. Rivingstone. So, we'll consider what I repeat as *entre nous*, please."

"I shall congratulate Mr. Gifford when I see him, may I not?"

"Not on my authority, if you'll oblige me, although it's quite true. She's very charming, no doubt. At the same time I believe entirely without fortune, and no one ever heard of her before; quite an obscure name, as one may say. He might have done better, dear Mrs. Parapet."

"Very likely; still, we must permit him to judge for himself. Thanks; my love to dear Julia, and good morning, dear Mrs. Cranstoun."

And, with a repetition of adieux, the vehicles separated, leaving the Drierly brougham in doubt whether to follow the Cranstoun coupé or the Parapet barouche.

"Now, dear Edith," said Mrs. Parapet, sweetly, "I have driven as much as I care to drive for the day, have no calls to make, and am therefore entirely at your service. So if you choose to give Lewis your orders, pray do so."

The coachman turned a respectful ear and took them. They were very intelligible, if very laconic; being comprised in the single monosyllable, "Home."

CHAPTER XV.

It is an unfortunate peculiarity about New York society that it affords little or no occupation in the hours of daylight. There are, to be sure, such things as morning calls to be paid there as well as elsewhere, but, in general, they are little indulged in save among the indubitable Parapets; and where a community is so exclusively commercial—where men who are not in counting-houses or offices of a morning are regarded for the most part with undisguised suspicion—where the majority of ladies devote themselves at such times to pursuits whereon masculine intrusion is least agreeable—the incitements to such social amenities are at their minimum.

But the resources which suggest themselves to the mind, and which, in older cities, are lavishly supplied in the shape of art galleries, museums, reading-rooms, ancient architecture, morning concerts, suburban excursions and other pastimes, commonly open to the middle class stranger sojourning in Europe, are as yet in a callow or infantile state in the Tyre of the West. Truly there are attempts in these directions which will occur to the critical Tyrian himself; but they are not such as a traveller can acknowledge to even approach the old world achievements in the same way.

Under these circumstances, people who are unfortunate enough to have leisure in New York are rather put to their trumps how to dispose of it; and wealthy American youth, or, for that mat-

ter, idlers of any age or condition, are sadly apt to have recourse to expedients which are the reverse of profitable or edifying. In the first place, by a process familiar to ethical analysts, leisure itself being commonly voted a crime, the unhappy possessors thereof are constantly impelled to verify the imputation. In the second, by an equally natural provision flowing from the presumed moral status of idlers, the net-weavers or caterers of pleasure prepare what their experience teaches are the most fascinating and profitable of dainties. That is to say, daylight leisure in New York is chiefly devoted to lounging in hotels, playing billiards, smoking cigars, drinking drams, and driving trotting-horses.

Hugh Gifford came upon the scene with unusnal social advantages; and, when it is said that even he, with his prudence, his dislike of low vice, and his honorable ambition, began, after a season, to incline overmuch towards these time-killers, the force of the impulsion may be fairly estimated. It is true, that he came too easily by his money to rightly measure the value of time; also true, that he was dissatisfied with the state of his relations with Marian; but inexperience and discontent together would not have led him into the sort of dissipation he now affected; it was because all other men of leisure affected the same, and because there was no other.

When the social condition is such, that wealthy young men have no spurs of conscience to remind them of a duty to the State, and when there is little social consideration to be gained by work which their gold has not already purchased without it, it is not a matter of surprise that efforts should not be made which point to nothing—not strange that aimless frivolity should take the place of useful ambition.

I am not writing an essay to prove the advantage of hereditary aristocracy, which would be, at least for many readers, "to assert what they have never seen denied, and distinguish what they are in no danger of confounding;" and would willingly escape, if possible, the censure Hallam passed upon Tasso. I mean simply to convey the idea that Hugh Gifford, a rich young man in the great western metropolis, being beyond the necessity for labor, and sickened almost beyond measure by glimpses of the political paths to distinction pointed out by the crafty-minded Doke, fell into ways he would gladly have avoided had any others presented themselves.

Let us, if we can, eschew cant of all sorts. Let us acknowledge the good in democracy, manhood suffrage, free soil, free trade, and, in the reasonable limits of decency and taste, free

speech as well: in which enjoyment, let us declare that, because all men vote, does not necessitate either a social or a political Utopia; its advantages may be many, but it maketh us not as gods that we worship the rabble and crown it king. Moreover, since free speech is the text of the momont, let me put upon record, ere it slip my memory, that the man who swears loudest there is no Salathiel Doke, is surely he who most employs and profits by him.

Hugh did not altogether abandon his political projects. He held the whole scheme under advisement. Mr. Clyde had gone into the interior of the State to arrange the machinery of a coming election. He would soon return, and then our hero would seek his advice, and, perhaps, abide by it. There was certainly one thing about Eldon Clyde's advice which made it rather different from other people's, which was, that in most cases he could back it up if he liked by insuring success in the path he counselled. Pending his rural wanderings, Clinton and Hugh were killing time together.

Clinton, assailed by father, mother, and friend together, had made oath that he really was not in love with Flora Dimity. If it would afford them any satisfaction, he would give up driving her in the park, most certainly. It had been merely a harmless attention on his part, and he was quite confident the young lady herself had not misconstrued it. She was a good partner, waltzed nicely, altogether a pretty, lively girl, full of vivacity—the most attractive blonde he had ever seen in fact—but as to anything serious, tut! he had never thought of such a thing.

The truth was, Clinton had a hereditary aversion from being bored, and bored he knew he would infallibly be, were he to make any other professions, adopt any other policy respecting Flora Dimity, than those he avowed. But a close observer would have soon detected in the young gentleman marks of disquietude. He began to smoke cigars of a morning, and—ominous symptom of a perturbed soul!—to drink champagne cocktails. He also took long drives into the country, now crossing by the ferries and penetrating into Long Island, and now plunging northward until he had left Harlem and King's Bridge far behind. Both he and Hugh Gifford were in capital frame of mind to encourage each other in folly—and they did so.

"You see, my dear fellow," said Clinton, with that ready employment of commonplaces men often display when something out of the common has dictated their action; "you see why it is we travel; there's really nothing for it here but to drink, smoke, play billiards, and drive fast horses. The women

are charming, of course; but since to be out of your cage of a morning is a sign of bankruptcy, or something worse, they don't care to harbor us by daylight. We have an afternoon drive in the park; we have dinner and a cigar at the clubs; a *soupcon* too much *en bourgeoise* perhaps; a lounge at the opera;—all very well from four to twelve, but that's only eight hours out of the twenty-four."

"Why not get up an Idler's Club," suggested Gifford, puffing lazily at his havana, "to reduce the art of doing nothing to the most exquisite and symmetrical practice? No one to be admitted of whom it can be proved that he has, or is ever likely to have, anything whatever to do. You'd make a capital president, and I think I could draw up a very good set of by-laws."

"The most emphatic of which," said Clinton, pursuing the idea, "should be that no one in trade should, under any possible pretext, be admitted."

"Nay, such a prohibition must not be pronounced, not explicitly in terms, that is. It would be included in the comprehensive generality of having something to do. To have such a clause literally set forth in so democratic a community, were to invert the object of the association, and to give us speedily something to do with a vengeance."

"True, true. The republican gorge riseth at the notion of dignified ease, as does that of the fiend at the sacred water. It might be well, to insure quiet, to affect that we were engaged in some most arduous and exacting toils."

"Seeking the Philosopher's Stone, for example."

"Our countrymen would not believe that capital was invested in so unpractical an object, and it would rouse their suspicions."

"The object being for the sake of lucre!"

"The goal is well enough, but the path to it would excite distrust. Better some new device for making cloth without cotton—walls without mortar—bricks without straw."

"Or scholars by steam, without the drudgery of a curriculum. Why waste years in laborious accumulation, when an active piston may thrust in the whole mass in a twinkling?"

"Such a machine would be useful in many ways, as in the manufacture of statesmen and diplomatists, seeing that as we change them every four years, a large supply ought properly to be kept on hand."

"*Je ne vois pas lo necessite*," said Hugh, recurring bitterly to his lengthy experience. "The candidates have need of long purses rather than of any other qualifications; and my friend, Mr. Doke,

is as efficacious as any patent machine could be in filling the niches when occasion serves."

"I'm rather surprised that any one should give himself the trouble," returned Clinton; "but every one to his taste."

"'Tis his vocation, Hal.' He makes public servants to order for so many dollars a piece, as Mr. Dimity—no offence—sells bombazine, or as the *Optimist* murders reputations, all in the way of business."

"Heaven keep him still in that mind, then, since it saves a world of labor to the Parapets!"

"Exactly. The Parapets rust that Dokes may shine; and the latter, instead of being grateful, are for ever abusing even your very shadows. They revile in the same breath that they vow you are mythical. They reign through a species of indolent sufferance, whilst they swear to the people it is by divine right."

"Let them swear what they like, and the people choose to believe," quoth Clinton, indolently; "so they leave us alone. There is one thing which troubles me sorely just now, a thing which you may have forgotten—there is no opera to-night."

"No opera!"

"*Ergo*, there is nothing to do. There is no ball, no party to fill up the blank, save the *conversazione* at those appalling Drierlys. We voted, you remember, that nothing but brute force should drag us thither; and what remains?"

"One of the theatres perhaps."

"Irish comedy for pit and gallery; Irish farce for pit and gallery; Irish stuffed stick, lilt, broken hat, tail of my coat, virtuous maid, broth of a boy, cruel agent of absentee landlord, beast of an English officer, who knows how to read and write and has clean hands, insults virtuous maid, and is knocked down by stuffed stick and broth of a boy for pit and gallery! Faugh! The thing is beyond measure offensive, preposterous, and untruthful."

"But all the theatres don't do Irish pieces."

"Too many of them do. Your friend Doke's constituency is heavy. The exceptions are scarcely more inviting; high comedy, with uneducated counter-jumpers trying to ape the fine gentleman; over-dressed Hebrews, with bushels of hair and tons of jewelry for *jeunes premieres*; and peacock-voiced women, buried in finery for every character, no matter how incongruous, with manners like those of a dissipated governess, for fine ladies. Why, these people have not the remotest idea, the faintest, how the beings walk, talk, dress, think, or feel, they conceive themselves to be imitating!"

"But if their audiences have no better, what harm?"

"Ah, that indeed! But you'll observe such a fact makes the exhibition rather more, than less, distasteful to any accidental exception. We have no national comedy, nor shall we have yet awhile."

"There are no national standards—I mean in the way of society—except the Parapets, and they cannot well be copied if they are never seen."

"Ah, but if they were seen, the people would not care for the example. The mass cares not to reproduce that which does not reflect itself. By and by, with the attrition of years and the cosmopolitan taste which comes with a maturer civilization, things may change. Not now."

"But we may eschew Thalia for Melpomene."

"Better, but still objectionable. The ideal of Tragedy is represented by the neck and lungs of Taurus bellowing ultraisms about the glory of ignorance. Dignity, pathos, hatred. despair, must be depicted as the lowest types of mankind would express or try to express them, else they reach not the popular heart. There can be no school where the artist works down to a level, and never up to one."

"Alas! we excel in nothing, then, it would seem."

"Oh dear, yes. In industry, invention, enterprise, all that goes to make up a rapid national growth, do we not? But scarcely in matters æsthetic, social grace, art, and so on. In these we are yet in our infancy, and perhaps it is well we are so; since the energies of the nation being directed to that which is more immediately practical and necessary, accomplish the more through being undivided."

"Assuming this to be true, it is very unfortunate that it should be so hazardous to say it. The burthen of our universal song, briefly speaking, is brag; and who interrupts the chorus is beaten for his pains. Alas! that democracies should be more ready to stone their prophets than despotisms!"

"And yet what more natural? Since, where all are equally powerful and equally responsible, the self-love of each is wounded by the suggestion of a national weakness or deficiency: it is not the philosopher but the ignoramus who writhes under such a stigma. Foreigners continually marvel at the Americans being, as they say, so thin-skinned, piquing themselves in the same breath for being so pachydermatous, and forgetting that the susceptibility to improvement is implied by the one, and the contrary by the other."

"But if, as you admit, we stone our prophets——"

"Ay, but we never forget what they say! A glorious conso-

lation to existing or intending martyrs, without which, perhaps, there would be no new ones."

"*Apropos*, they tell me the Drierlys invariably cage all the Wise Men of the East who may happen to be running at large, to give *eclat* to their shows; since you can't stand the poor histrions, what say you to being bored for an hour and trying the magi?"

"Agreed; on one condition."

"Which is——"

"That we really *do* come away in an hour. That delightful mixture of Puritanism, mutual admiration, provincialism, and Mrs. Grundyism becomes rather exhausting after sixty minutes. Besides, we are not in the highest favor, you must know."

"And why not, pray?"

"Simply that nothing can induce Mrs. or Miss Parapet to darken the Drierly doors, notwithstanding their quasi-literary position. Of course, they're not in our set, and equally of course, liberal folk overlook punctilio in the cases of clever writers. But there is something in the Drierly atmosphere which the female Parapet, however graciously entreated, absolutely declines to breathe; so that the males, albeit courteously received, are, in a manner, accepted under protest."

"I see. These gentry are *parvenus* like myself; but, unlike myself, wish to manœvre their way to circles where they are not quite wanted."

"It might be too harsh to say that; but I fear they would prefer to be uncomfortable in such than at ease where better known. The way of the world; only I suppose more conspicuous here because of the absence of nominal or legal social distinctions, so that the incongruity between profession and practice looks sharper by contrast. None will insist more eloquently than the Drierlys on democratic equality; they affect to despise a stray Englishman who happens to bear a title through no fault of his own; and yet almost their whole lives are passed in a bitter struggle for access to strata of society they think better or higher in general repute than that they now flourish in."

"Ah, you are jealous because they have what you are so deficient in—a laudable ambition!"

"I will present you as their champion! Being, like themselves, born and bred in New England, they will receive you with open arms!"

"That will scarcely be consistent with their character, as you draw it, when they learn the obscurity of my origin."

"Tut, man! that is where their democracy comes in; the obscurity of your origin would doubtless be damnatory but for the extenuating circumstances. They certainly wouldn't see you but for those. But the Drierlys are too democratic to look fororigin when the obscure one stands in a halo such as yours. 'A man's a man for a' that,' invariably with them—*when he's rich and keeps a carriage!*"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE Drierlys were a peculiar family. Generally speaking, the impression they made on the mind of a stranger was that they were very bigoted, very provincial, very well educated in very narrow limits, very ambitious in a social point of view, and very conceited. Physically, they were very much alike, so that there was always some doubt about telling one from another. They were skinny, sallow, with hair of feeble whity-brown, and colorless eyes, and were each and all of a semi-diaphanous character, so that for one of the family to melt slowly away before your eyes would hardly have excited your astonishment or consternation.

The Drierlys were also remarkable people politically. They came originally from New England, and indeed always seemed out of their element in New York. They combined, in a very happy manner, the Puritanic and the literary character—the strange mingling of asceticism and belles-lettres, the yearning for intellectual flesh-pots with a morbid regard for appearances—which grows indigenously in the atmosphere of Boston. Professedly, they were ardent democrats, and advocated strenuously a levelling process to be applied to all above them; whilst all below they wished to be vigorously kept at a distance. Thus they positively loathed the presumed assumption of the Parapets; but they had rather take serpents into their houses than people with less money or inferior social position than their own.

A Drierly, if questioned on the point, would have professed to be a cosmopolitan. America was the country which opened its arms to all races and conditions of men; all were welcome, for all mankind were brothers. Unhappily this proved, upon close investigation, to be merely a theoretical fraternity; for the hatred of the Drierlys for other nations was found to be of the nature

f an absorbing passion. Most especially they hated England; ssuming, in all cases, that every Englishman they met was in-lividually responsible for every error in judgment or policy the overnment of his country had ever committed. But their aver-ion was tolerably comprehensive; embracing all foreigners who id not promptly declare that their own country was a hell and merica a heaven, of which the Drierlys were highly conspicu-us and eminent ministering angels.

This charitable characteristic of the Drierlys, however, began ery fairly and handsomely at home. They disliked people of heir own country in proportion to their distance from themselves, nd opposed slavery rather because they hated slaveholders than ecause they pitied the slaves. As their countrymen flourished earer and nearer to their own home, the animosity of the Drierlys was slowly mitigated; but it was only those of their nmediate set, circle, or clique that they regarded with unalloyed pprobation; and to obtain this seal it was needful, as a rule, to ay tribute of some sort to the family.

Nothing could exceed the sweetness and amiability of the Drierlys as shown to those who, from their wealth or position, ould afford them a stepping-stone upward, and fortify their orldly consideration; except, indeed, the indifference, if not itterness, with which they treated those who might once have erved them, and could no longer do so. Such as were in this nlucky category, most especially if the world had treated them ardly, the Drierlys regaled with a mixture of acrimony and con-empt refreshing to behold, and delicious to partake of.

The station claimed by the Drierlys rested upon somewhat trange foundations, consisting mainly in certain dry and didac-c lucubrations contributed to the literature of his country by the ead of the family some half a century before. These productions, noffensive and respectable enough in their way, were assuredly f too bloodless and negative a type either to possess abiding in-uence, or to justify the hope of a brilliant reputation. But from he paucity of rivals, and the blamelessness of their author's rivate life, people were willing to accord them higher consider-tion than his writings intrinsically deserved. It was not sur-rising that this element of kindly concession somehow escaped he eye of the Drierlys, or that they cherished a profound con-iction that their illustrious relative had clearly won a wreath, which those of the greatest sages of the elder world were ut as dust and tinsel.

Personally, the old gentleman was not prepossessing, nor did e, to appearance, bear his honors over meekly. He was of an

austere presence, as if ever fearful of his state being infringed, and, albeit a profusion of snowy hair and beard gave reverence to his face, they did not give it benignity. He was reputed to rule his household by no law of kindness, and to exact a species of deference, if not of homage, which is worse than worthless, otherwise than as the freewill offering of love. When he stood by, no dog was permitted to bark; and any stranger who might be caught smiling at what appeared, considering all things, a ludicrous exaggeration, was cut, tabooed, ostracized, sent to Coventry, done anything to which the genius of the Drierlys could devise, or their malice compass.

Flowing from such a source, there was a flavor of solemn humbug in the mansion of the Drierlys, which inspired awe or ridicule according to the experience or susceptibility to the absurd of the visitor. There was a pomp and circumstance which were systematically tried on all new comers, and which were supposed to be accepted as matters of course by those whom the family patronized, or, in general, who were in a position to stand it. For those, on the other hand, upon whom the display would make no impression, and whom it was yet worth while to propitiate, there was an affectation of overflow—a gay, light-hearted, affectionate *abandon* which was marvellously effective; that is to say, with people who were deficient in that faculty so largely possessed by Americans, a swiftness in detecting what is inconsistent with common sense.

Mrs. Drierly was seldom seen, but, as has been before observed, the extraordinary resemblance which subsisted made it really quite immaterial which of the feminine branches should do the honors upon any given occasion. It was sure to be somebody who was peaked, thin-voiced, semi-transparent, well up in the ologies, austere to inferiors, sycophantic to superiors, reverential to the head of the house, adroit as a stirrer up of lions, intensely national in the Drierly sense, and a cordial hater of all dissentients.

Thus, when Gifford and Clinton Parapet were ushered up from the hall, they were met near the landing by a diaphanous Somebody who received them with pale affability, and a series of courtesies expressive of profound welcome, such as was fitting to the advent of a Millionaire and a Parapet.

"We are very gay to-night," said this ghostly Being, in an acidulated and slightly nasal accent, "although promiscuous. Talk has been lively. There are a good many ladies round. Pa' and Professor Sukkar have conferred on immortality. Pa' is *speaking* now. H-u-s-h!"

This last monosyllable was directed to the servant who had flung open the drawing-room door, through which a hollow voice was heard, as from the tombs, discoursing within.

"Man, then," pursued the Voice with that assurance which indicates no fear of contradiction, "will be precluded by no subterranean devices from asserting perennial spiritual elasticity; since, even if driven to estimate the subject with the eye of the physicist, we shall find that by some occult and deeply mysterious processes of percolation he shall divest himself of his trammels, and soar into the empryean upon pinions devoid of corporeal ponderosity!"

"That's so," endorsed another voice near the door, in which Hugh, to his amazement, recognized the tones of Mr. Doke.

"Misther Parapet and Misther Gifford!" announced the domestic, who had evidently been trained to watch for periods. A buzz of admiration ran round the apartment at the imposing names, and that general flutter succeeded among the Drierlys and their adherents which always attended the arrival in their circle of wealth and station.

"Ladies!" said the Head of the family, rising from his chair of state, and standing in front of it, flanked by two large solar lamps, which beamed upon him with quite a picturesque effect, —"ladies—Mr. Parapet, Mr. Gifford. Gentlemen—Mr. Parapet, Mr. Gifford. Mr. Parapet," he added, unctuously, "knows full well how welcome he is here, and that whoever calls Mr. Parapet friend is no less so. Many of you know Mr. Parapet: Mrs. Camomile, Mrs. Cranstoun, Mrs. Dimity—Mr. Parapet. Some of you do not know Mr. Parapet: Miss Steelyard of Boston, Miss Rooke, Miss Cranstoun, Miss Dimity—Mr. Parapet, Mr. Gifford. I beg pardon! Miss Rosette P. Aloe, M.D.,—Mr. Parapet, Mr. Gifford."

A profusion of bows and courtesies followed this partly superfluous introduction.

"Professor Sukkar of Heidelberg, the great Psychommetrical Idealist—Mr. Parapet, Mr. Gifford. Major Gollop, the great capitalist and speculator; Mr. Doke, the eminent politician; Mr. Moke, the far-famed abolitionist; Mr. Coke, the celebrated lawyer; Mr. Prodder, the warbler of nature; Mr. Jobb, of the Post Office; Mr. Schwindel, of the Custom House; Mr. Whiting Blobb, of the *Centurion;* Mr. Grindle of the *Moon;* etc., etc.—Mr Parapet, Mr. Gifford."

Mr. Drierly here sunk back exhausted into his chair, and our two friends had time to glance comprehensively about the large rooms, which communicated by a lofty arch, and around which

the company were gathered in a circle, or rather in an ellipse, at the upper end of which was the Drierly dais. Scarcely, however, had they seated themselves, when a little gentleman with green glasses and no hair, who sat on the right of the host, leaped spasmodically to his feet, and exclaimed:

"Penetrated wiz a lively sense of de greatness of dis glorious country, even I, de poor exile, dus expatriated, must agree to tank our world-famous patron for giving me opportunity to make acquaintance wiz dose distinguished shentlemens. Vash it not for interrupting the vonderful vords of our world-famous patron, more as dis might I say; but no vords of mine can be allowed to shtop dose rays of vishdom wherein we bashk as in de noon-day sun—dose rays of de glorious orb, like him, which truth sprinkles and light diffuses!"

"Oncore!" cried Mr. Blobb, immediately taking down this speech in shorthand, while Miss Aloe rapped on the mantelpiece with her fan, and a general murmur of satisfaction ran round the apartment.

"Our friend, Professor Sukkar, while he does justice always to our majestic—our towering land—over-rates, perhaps, my humble capacities." (Murmurs of "No! no!") "It is not, to be sure, given to all to grapple with the tremendous problems of our life and being with precisely equivalent perspicacity, for men have different gifts. Every man has his gifts." ("Every man has his baits," growled Mr. Gollop, from his corner.) "Not to the humble but industrious mole is given the eagle eye which glares undimmed upon the gorgeous luminary of day, yet he is not deficient in compensatory advantages which atone even for the absence of so valuable a faculty. Not to the capitalist"—(a bow from Gollop)—"not to the journalist"—(ditto from Blobb)—"not to the physician"—(the same from Dr. Rosette P. Aloe)—"nay, not even to the Psychommetrical Idealist"—(oriental salaam from Sukkar)—"is it given to penetrate those profound intricacies which connect nature, spirit, and the poetical faculty in elusive but indestructible bonds, only to be detected and expounded by rare and wonderful organizations, whose native genius, chastened by severest toil, enables them to trace the misty paths through an exceptional appreciation of their obscure, yet heaven-born adumbrations!"

"That's so!" repeated Mr. Doke, evidently profoundly impressed.

"De organization of Homer!" exclaimed Professor Sukkar, volcanically; "of Goethe of Shakespeare, and of—Drierly!"

"Oncore!" cried Blobb.

"What the deuce do they mean?" whispered Gifford to his companion.

"Deuce take me if I know, except it is some roundabout incense to their Magnus Apollo," replied Clinton.

"What was them men's baits?" asked Gollop, mistily, of his nearest neighbor, Blobb.

"Baits?"

"Yes. How could you ketch 'em if you wanted to? Which was't now? Politics, gals, hosses, or buildin'?"

"Ah, you're always so funny, Mr. Gollop!" said Blobb doubtfully, at a venture.

"Funny!" echoed Gollop, relapsing into his arm-chair. "That isn't my bait, anyhow."

"The English," continued Mr. Drierly, after pausing, clearing his throat, and looking fishily into space,—"the English, with that narrow-minded perversity which is their predominant idiosyncrasy, have denied to this great and growing land that mighty pre-eminence in everything that ever Was, or Is, or Will Be, which is our birthright" (groans), "and in the particular department of intellectuo-poetic discrimination—of creative spontaneity in the poetic perceptions—of what may be termed the Pre-Raffaelitic faculty of interpreting the Real and the Vital of Nature's handiwork in contradistinction to the Artificial and the Lifeless forms of the schools,—they have, I say, in this wise endeavored to exalt the Thinkers of the effete and cramp-souled Old World over those of free-born America!"

"Hi, hi!" began Mr. Doke, but was instantly checked by Gifford, who was happily near enough to intervene.

"Poshterity," cried Professor Sukkar, "vill put on dose Tinkers de seal of oblivion!"

"Meanwhile," proceeded the Patriot Sage, "our friend, Mr. Steelyard of Boston, informs me that a society has been thought of in that great centre of thought for the exclusion of all foreign intellectual as well as material wares—for the protection of native brains as well as that of native manufactures, which, although it may justly be thought that they are certain to distance competition, and so render such a design supererogatory, may yet be deemed a fit proposal for national consideration."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Mr. Prodder, waking up from a state of coma. "Why should trade be protected and the muses go naked? Why should our odes and eclogues be bandied in cheap editions, when, by keeping all others from the market, we could force the people to read them!"

"Um!" doubted Blobb, "we couldn't do without the news, you know."

"News, sir!" said Mr. Drierly, reprovingly, "we would make our own news, and quite enough, too, for a free-born people."

"Misther Bladderly Flytte!" announced the servitor at the door.

"Who may he be?" asked Hugh, *sotto voce.*

"Why," said Clinton, in the same tone, "is it possible you never heard of Flytte? He's the great traveller, you know, who goes abroad, learns all about a foreign country in six weeks, and then writes a comprehensive book about it."

"Humph! I don't like his face. That projecting mouth and the rat-like teeth are to me full of unpleasant reminiscences."

"But you've never seen him before?"

"Oh, dear, no! I was thinking of some one else."

"What's the matter with Prodder? See, he's turned his face to the wall."

"He doesn't write travels, does he?"

"Oh, no! but Flytte writes poems."

The new arrival was marshalled to the front by an escort of feminine Drierlys, alike as the Antipholi, to do homage to the Nestor of poesy, philosophy, and the arts.

"I have just parted," observed Flytte, affectedly, having paid his compliments, "from Mr. Randolph Burgee of Georgia."

"Of Georgia!" repeated the patriarch, frowning.

"And Mr. Walsingham Scuttlé of Alabama."

"Of Alabama!" echoed four Drierlys, with simultaneous wrath.

"Very gentlemanly men they are; and although, to be sure, they are slaveholders——"

"Slaveholders! Oh, oh, oh!" chorused a dozen voices in dismal deprecation.

"Dey ish shentlemens like de imps of der tuyfel!" exclaimed Professor Sukkar, furiously.

"They certainly did no original sin by being voluntarily born such."

"Open to controversy that—open to controversy," said Blobb, sententiously; "been refuted in the *Centurion* years ago, as Flytte ought to know."

"What's his baits?" inquired Gollop, thickly; he had been chewing tobacco on the sly, and spitting softly in the grate.

"His baits?"

"Yes," repeated Gollop, impatiently, "his weak spots—his *darlin'* vices. What's he sweet on? What does he like best?"

"Slaveholders, I reckon. Beg pardon, Mr. Gollop, I thought you were joking again."

"Jokin' be d——d! I didn't get half the shares in your paper by jokin', but by findin' out folkses baits."

"Slavery," began Mr. Drierly, in a very high key, whereat all the adherents cried, "Hush!" and rubbed their hands as if to say, "Now for it!" while Professor Sukkar cried, "Ordersh," and Dr. Rosette P. Aloe rapped on the mantelpiece with her fan. "Slavery," repeated the philosopher, looking over Mr. Flytte's head as though he were talking to somebody about ten feet high immediately behind him, "is the sum of all Villanies and the aggravated quintessence of each and every hypothetical Turpitude; and the toleration extended to its vile practisers is a premium paid to vice. We are the Apostles of Freedom, and hold that as an abomination which, while it profiteth not our purses, drags down and blackens our souls. Not by gentleness and long-suffering will we entreat the children of sin for whom the penalty of social ostracism becomes a religious duty——"

"Oncore!" shouted Blobb, enthusiastically.

"Beautiful, ain't it?" cried several worshippers in chorus, while Prodder, delighted with the reproof administered to a brother bard, gazed with passionate admiration on the patriarch, and melodiously chanted:

"He wears the white flower of a blameless life!"

"Wherefore," continued the Sinless One, "let us have nought to do with Randolph Burgee; let us hold ourselves guiltless of association with Walsingham Scuttle. Let us rather hold them up to the scorn and hatred of mankind, that they may become the Ishmaels of the land, and that the Christian world may not include us in the reprobation which attaches to their stupendous crime."

"Hurrah!" "Hear, hear!" "Dat ish goot!"

"Oncore!" arose tumultuously from the throng of disciples.

"Sir," quoth Mr. Flytte, manfully, and forgetting his lisp, "that may be the way to infuriate the Sinners, but I cannot think it the best way to abolish the Sin."

"What do you think of this?" whispered Clinton.

"Think! That he is a selfish old hypocrite," answered Hugh. "Heaven knows I have no love for slavery; but this cheap method of being conspicuous for virtue—of getting credit for mercy to the slave, at the small expense of being unmerciful to

the master—must surely have an alloy of meanness, of bigotry, and of selfishness in it."

"Of course it has. It is this narrow-minded advocacy which has reflected so much prejudice on a noble cause. But good taste has always been on the side of obstruction, and I suppose will ever be."

"Niggers is niggers," muttered Mr. Doke, not relishing the attack on a class always in alliance with his party. "Niggers is niggers; and blowin' won't make 'em white. What do *you* think of it, Colonel Gollop?"

"Let him cackle," replied Gollop, cautiously, and quite in sympathy politically with his questioner, "if it makes him feel good; for it won't make any difference, no how, and blowin' and bein' king-pin is his baits. Interdoose me to that man—that *rich* man who's fetcht his pile from Californy. I've been tryin' to spot him more 'n a month!"

"Only to peculiar and exceptional organizations," continued Mr. Drierly, with dignity, "is it given to penetrate the true solutions of complicated social phenomena. In such cases we do not argue, we *know;* we do not speculate, we *divine;* and thus, armed with a knowledge which is not obnoxious to common criticism, we lay down immutable formulæ for the instruction and guidance of Mankind!"

With these luminous words the patriarch, bowing loftily, withdrew. It was his custom to retire at a comparatively early hour on the occasion of these intellectual symposia, when it would be intimated that he was engaged in profound study in his library; but when, if traced to his actual retreat, he would have been found comfortably snoring in bed.

Most of the company rose as he departed, while Professor Sukkar and Dr. Aloe, supported by four translucent Drierlys, supported him to the door, bowing low, in speechless homage, as he passed its portals. A hum of applause attended this ceremony, serving as a sort of graceful music to garnish the exit.

"Our great friend," said the physician, shrilly, as the door closed, "is in force to-night."

"He ish," affirmed the professor, conclusively, "de light, de beacons of de world!"

"Only needing to be a little more cosmopolitan," said Mr. Flytte, gravely, "to set it on fire."

The professor looked at him suspiciously. "Sir," he observed, at length, feeling called on, in a general way, to confute something, "vat you call de Plutonian in contradistinction to de Neptunian theory——"

"A thousand pardons! But I see my friend Mr. Parapet ıoving toward the door, and must really speak with him before e goes."

One of the Shadows placed herself in Clinton's way. "Pray on't go, Mr. Parapet. Indeed you mustn't. We usually play ıd sing some after Pa goes. And see how much dear Mr. ifford is in request! It will really be most unkind of you to ar him away from us!"

Dear Mr. Gifford was in request with a vengeance. The ompany had made a slight, but very perceptible movement to-ards him, when he was first announced. During the intelli-ible debate which had succeeded, the company had oscillated npatiently between respect for philosophy and attraction for ıcre. It had shuffled its feet and moved its chairs uneasily.)nce or twice Mr. Doke had arisen, and tried to glide round nperceived to Hugh's neighborhood; in doing which he knocked omething down, and was looked at with solemn reproof by sev-ral ghostly worshippers, while the idol himself made a comma nto a semicolon, that the interruption to his discourse might ppear more marked and reprehensible; whereat, Mr. Gollop, who was burning to be introduced to our hero, and did not want Doke, as he averred, to "play no advantages gittin' hold of him fust," seized that enterprising gentleman fiercely by the coat-tail and forced him, struggling, back into his chair. But the philosopher once gone, all hesitancy in the repression of in-clination went too, and an enthusiastic gush of popular appre-ciation rolled upon Gifford in a flood, the more overwhelming for being hitherto confined.

"Dear Mr. Gifford, pray allow me to present my daughter. Julia, love, this is Mr. Gifford you've heard us all speak so much of." "Excuse me, ma'am; Mr. Gifford, Colonel Gollop; you know his partner, Mr. Ingott. Ha! ha! ha! Guess he *is* a rich man. What he don't know, ain't worth——" "Most happy, I'm sure. Delighted, dear madam, certainly." "How are yer? I kin help yer with the Sixth, I kin; and as to Gam-mony——" "I'm told, dear sir, you know every inch of Cali-fornia; and as my dear Robert is going out in the Electric Eel——" "So pleased to hear you liked my 'Union Square to Hyde Park Corner;' and, as 'Belgravia to Fifth Avenue' is coming out next week——" "*Do* let me say a word to my dear Mr. Gifford. Did you meet the Von Donks in Europe?" "Well, I never! On Blobb's authority?" "No, the descrip-tion of the carriage was in the *Optimist*—same column with Dan Prior, the nigger minstrels, and Sloggins the gentlemanly

butcher of Ninety-ninth street." "Show!" "Fact." "Mr. Gifford, I beg your pardon, I'm sure; but I must speak with him. The pleasure of shaking hands with you, sir—honor—never forget—" "Made fifty thousand in Consolidated Underground." "Is that so?" "'Tweren't, 'twas Harlem River!" "Anyhow, he made it in a week." "I must interdoose Mr. Gollop and Miss Gollop." "You're very kind, I'm sure." "And if I can't put ye through, me and Doke here, I'll bust!" "Don't, please, don't push!" "I can't get any nearer!" "Mr. Gifford!—Dr. Aloe!—Two such distinguished people ought to know each other." "You, sir, bein', as you air, the architeck of your own fortunes," etc., etc., etc.

The adulation Gifford encountered was truly sickening enough, but—what man of his years and experience would?—he did not attribute it entirely to his wealth. He stood and breathed a great deal of the intoxicating incense; enough, perhaps, to bewilder and confuse a clearer head and a maturer judgment than his own; and then, feeling a sudden sense of shame, he turned to extricate himself and to find his friend. Clinton had contrived to spirit his blue-eyed charmer into some quiet nook or another, where he was flirting desperately, and oblivious of everything on earth but Flora Dimity. As Hugh, with great difficulty, struggled through and out of the legion of his adorers, he met the eyes of Marian fixed earnestly upon him. Her face wore a smile; but he thought, and thought truly, that, excepting one, it was the saddest smile he had ever seen there.

CHAPTER XVII.

It is a sad consolation when we have, with such shifts as we may, provided against any dire calamity, to have the soundness of our judgment attested by the event. When Marian had stipulated for that year's delay which was to gauge the steadiness of Gifford's love, as well as to serve in a measure as an atonement for what she thought not altogether right in his treatment of Virginia Chester, she had attached far less significancy to the first object than to the second. There seemed to be no special reason why a love which had outlived a year of separation should droop during a year of frequent intercourse and promised fruition. And Marian, although far more free of

vanity than most of her sex, could not be entirely unconscious of her own exceeding loveliness, or of the strong fascination she exercised without effort upon those around her.

But as the fatal, never-pausing time rolled on, she began to believe that the prudence of her stipulation was wretchedly verified. She saw Hugh often, and, when with her, no woman, however exacting, need have been dissatisfied with his tenderness, his attention, his marked acknowledgment of the cherished spell which bound him. But all that she heard in his absence seemed to Marian full of gloom and foreboding.

Report said, with a malignant persistency which enforced conviction, that Gifford was becoming dissipated. His household, which had been noted for order, regularity, and unusual decorum for that of a bachelor, was now declared to be the scene of nightly revels, and of reckless extravagance. Clinton Parapet, who was belying the promise of a well-spent youth in a most unexpected manner, was Hugh's constant companion, and the pair vied with each other, it was said, in wildness and excess. The fact was, report exaggerated infamously, the truth being substatially that one young man was endeavoring to escape from *ennui* and the disgust which sprung from his political researches and experience, while the other was trying to forget Flora Dimity. But worse than this was busily hinted, and Marian heard the worst.

Mr. Rivingstone too, standing as he did in the place of a father, and having a strong title to her respect and affection, from having, with untiring skill and industry, pursued an investigation of the last importance to Marian's position and future welfare, felt it his duty to lay before her such truths as he thought she might fairly weigh, prior to committing her happiness irrevocably to the keeping of Hugh Gifford.

The investigation, so momentous and so difficult, was also of a most delicate description. It involved nothing less than the fact whether, legally speaking, Marian was a free woman or a slave. Before Mr. Rivingstone had undertaken it, she would actually have been liable to be arrested and sent to the South, under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law. But Rivingstone, who had acted as her dead father's legal adviser, had drawn, under his instructions, papers of manumission for Marian's mother, which took effect prior to her infant's birth : that these papers were executed as well as prepared, the lawyer could swear; the question was as to their whereabouts or present existence.

Nor was this all. The estate had gone to the legal heirs; but a large accumulation of money, which Rivingstone knew his friend to have saved as the surplus of a heavy income, was no-

where to be found, although he was equally certain Mr. Rooke had intended it for Marian. It was in connection with these important subjects that she had been summoned from California; in the same connection that Rivingstone had gone to the South a short time after; and in the same connection that the party had subsequently sailed for Europe.

The lawyer's efforts then pointed to the momentous objects of metamorphosing his ward from a poor runaway slave to a wealthy and free woman. In the respect of securing her liberty *de jure* as well as *de facto*, he had already substantially succeeded. The less important, but highly desirable, pecuniary consummation, was not yet achieved, although it was nearer than, with professional prudence, he thought it wise to declare.

His services and his sincere regard for the child of an old and much attached friend were warmly estimated by Marian; and it scarcely needed personal qualities of a nature at once dignified and lovable to make her regard him with almost filial consideration. When, therefore, with no little hesitancy and compunction, he spoke on the subject of Gifford's course of life, she was prepared to listen with deference and attention.

"He is without doubt a brilliant young man," said the lawyer, "and could achieve anything with steadiness and perseverance. But he has a fastidious taste, which makes him keenly sensitive to the repulsive features of any particular pursuit or vocation, and which blinds him to the redeeming ones. Yet he has fortune, and tells me he was born poor, without explaining the change. You have known him longer. Should you think steadfastness—persistency in a given object—were strong characteristics of his?"

"No," said truthful Marian, sadly; "I should fear, on the contrary, that they were not."

"He spoke of entering political life," continued Mr. Rivingstone, "of a desire to serve his country. But the months have rolled by, and he seems to have attempted nothing in such a direction. His pursuits are said to be of the most frivolous character. This, of course, he might easily outlive. But worse is said: rumor is swift to magnify such things; yet, when testimony appears quite universal and concurrent as to a man's habits, it is unfortunately apt to be well founded in fact."

"I know it."

"Believe me, I should be slow in attempting to sway your judgment—at least, on such a subject. Nor would I counsel you to believe one-half of what you hear. But it is right you should

e upon your guard; and my duty, under all the circumstances, ould be but imperfectly performed, did I not put you so."

"He is, as you say, very fastidious," said Marian, slowly, as if eking something to say in extenuation. "A strange mixture caution and impetuosity. I don't think bad habits would mas- r him. He is too proud for that. But they might go far ough to make those who loved him miserable."

"Ay," said Rivingstone, mournfully, "there are many who eep a fair front to the world, too selfish to risk its penalties, too wardly to face its frowns, who yet indulge vile passions in se- et to that degree as to make a hell of their firesides."

"He would never do that!" exclaimed Marian, quickly. Hugh is not selfish—not at least in great things, and he is any- ing——" and her thoughts wandered back to the past. "Oh! ything but cowardly. But——"

"Nay, I was not describing him, but what others have be- ome. Let us trust that report is exaggerated, and that all may et be well. My duty is done in uttering a warning, and I am ure you will not misconstrue its motives."

"Indeed, dear sir, I will not."

"For I shall only strive to do what your dear father, had he ived, would have done; and my mistakes will be only those of rudence or over-jealous care of what I regard as a sacred rust."

"And you shall have," cried Marian, with one of her old out- bursts, which were rarer now, "no less than a daughter's affec- tion and obedience."

There were many conferences like this. Hints and sugges- tions, rather than direct statements on his part; partial defences and acknowledgments on hers. There were occasions when Rivingstone heard what he knew would have given his ward great pain to hear; and he suppressed such things as honorable men will, giving the accused the benefit of the doubt where great room existed for misconstruction. To his eyes and to those of the world, so far as it took the pains to form an opinion on the subject, Gifford was simply going by a very much frequented and commonplace road to destruction. To his conscience there was nothing for it but to keep so noble a girl as Marian Rooke from becoming the young man's travelling companion.

But Marian Rooke herself saw deeper than this. She saw that Gifford was scarcely more in his right groove, in his proper niche, when scattering unearned wealth among aimless companions in he gold-worshipping city, than he was while delving as a labor- r at Armstrong's Bar. There were more people of culture and

of leisure about him, but there were no more people of highe
The men with whom he had unhappily been brought in c
in this Babylon had poisoned the very springs of his am
by showing how miserably poor and worthless was all t
once prized and could now strive for. Truly he shoulc
more strength of mind than to be led thus tenderly to se
one side of the picture. But it was the office of true
clear-sighted, womanly, wifely love—to make him see the
and then, ah! how much with such aid and encouragem
had the powers to achieve!

With such thoughts and convictions as these, Marian
have gone on despite truth, or despite calumny, firm in purp
fulfil her share of the bargain—if he asked it—at the close
year. But there was something else to traverse the though
to shake, if not to reverse, the convictions.

Hers was not a nature to harbor jealousy. That ignobl
sion was, of all others, the one most foreign to Marian's cha
When whispers reached her ears of attentions pointedly c
by Gifford to Edith Parapet—attentions graciously recei
she gave them little heed. She was not so ignorant of th
tentions of that proud family, as not to know that, for all I
advantages, they would look for greater and higher one
suitor whose alliance they would be disposed to favor; nor
she believe that her betrothed could wittingly be guilty c
act of treachery toward herself. Still, there was more t
color to the rumor in the manner of the parties inculpated
together, and yet in the eye of the world, than could be
agreeable to an affianced woman; and Hugh's frequent vi
the Parapet mansion, and his all but inseparable intimac
its heir, added strength to the current reports.

When the repetition of these stories began to be irksc
her, Marian, instead of inviting an explanation from Hugh
was too proud for that—sought refuge from the gossip
world in the country house of Mr. Rivingstone, situated
dozen miles up the North River. Here dwelt her guar
sister, and here Marian was always secure of quiet and an
tionate welcome. After midwinter she spent most of he
there, rarely coming to the metropolis; and Gifford, after
frequently disappointed when he sought her at the town
took umbrage, and absented himself for some weeks. Est
ment seemed to be growing up between them, yet still i
only be temporary and trifling. A few words of frank
nation, of affectionate acknowledgment, of regret for past
of fresh promises for the future, would have been quite en

so far as the gentle girl was concerned, to set Gifford's suit all right again

One cold miserable day in early March, Marian came to town to do some necessary shopping, and the modest brougham of Mr. Rivingstone awaited her without; she had just entered the famous "store" of Mr. Dimity, when she was encountered by one of the Drierly Shades. There was an expression of cadaverous joy on the countenance of this lady, which, to those who knew her best, portended the dissemination of something sad, or painful, or scandalous; and even Marian, who knew her but slightly, would fain have passed with a courteous recognition, but the Shadow would not have it so. She knew that Marian had been from town, and that, therefore, what she had to inflict might have the exquisite zest of a fresh and unexpected wound. Furthermore, there had been some slight political coolness between Mr. Rivingstone and Mr. Drierly of late; and the female Drierly always treated such matters with the bitterest personal animosity. Lastly, she had a vague notion of the engagement of Gifford and Marian,—vague, because neither had thought it necessary to publish the fact to the world, and what she had to say would at once gratify her curiosity, while it inflicted a pang on the near friend of one who had dared to differ with a Drierly.

"Dear Miss Rooke," she ejaculated, with that cordiality of manner the family kept largely in stock for people who rode in broughams. "Such a pleasure to see you. I know you've been out of town. The country must be very dreary at this season. But, of course, you have your reasons."

"Reasons of convenience and friendship only," replied Marian, smiling; "and I go but a short distance, not much further than a Broadway omnibus will carry one."

"Oh, indeed! Then, of course, you can go to the opera, or to parties of an evening, and all that?"

"Not quite so readily as while staying in town; still I *can* do so for a particular occasion."

"That's so nice, now. If you only would come to our *conversazione* next Tuesday. Count Poppo, who married our sweet poetess, you know, Maud Squelch, is going to read a paper on the mediæval renaissance of Abyssinian art. What a love of a poplin that is! And Mr. Clinton Parapet is coming, and Mr. Gifford; of course you've heard, by-the-by?"

"Heard what?"

"Oh, about the engagement!"

"Whose engagement?"

"Why, all the world is talking about it. Surmise is t into certainty. The winter has been lively with suspicion the spring blossoms with facts. Mr. Gifford is to marry Parapet!"

Marian made no reply, but she turned very pale, an Shadow saw her arrow had gone home.

"Unless," pursued the relentless Apparition, "all sign omens are to be translated backwards, the happy event w be long postponed."

"What signs? What omens?" asked Marian, st though her tall figure shook for a moment, and she mov if to get near a chair.

"Together always at the opera—*tete-a-tete* in the sad when driving in the Park—the happy man domesticated family mansion—Miss Parapet coloring whenever his na mentioned—Miss Parapet's eyes following him wherever he i in society—Mr. Gifford buying a lovely set, opals and diam at Bullet and Green's—and being caught in the act by Pinckney—and she wearing them the night after at the aca —etc., etc.; and what would you have more?"

"What, indeed?" said Marian, more faintly, but sin quietly into a seat.

"So I may put you down as certain, may I not, dear Miss R And we shall have the great pleasure to see you on Tuesd

"Perhaps—thanks—yes," replied Marian, mechanically, Shade glided triumphantly away.

The rumor was gaining strength—vitality; was becoming promising to a degree that threatened the worst—its verific Alas, for the days when both Hugh and Marian believed selves penniless, with the world all before them, and nothin hope to cheer them on! Alas, for the dear old days at strong's Bar, where nought but the knowledge of mutua had been wanting to make an earthly paradise! From thi ment Marian began to realize a terrible truth—the truth th ford's wealth was somehow a barrier to their love stronger the poverty had been which parted him from Virginia Che

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Give me a reward!" cried Clinton Parapet, as he bounded into Gifford's breakfast-room one bright morning in spring.

"For what?"

"For the most praiseworthy thing in life, inventing you a new pleasure! Here we are, bored and hipped to our heart's discontent; having done operas, theatres, balls, parties, artists' receptions, wedding breakfasts, racing on the Bloomingdale Road, betting on the Centreville Track, showing our paces in his park of parks, even indulging—for your blessed delectation, not mine, remember—in several political meetings; what is there left for us but gentlemanly suicide, going abroad, or, *dernier ressort*, the invention of a new pleasure?"

"But you see," said Hugh, looking rather jaded and woebegone for a handsome young man of fortune with uncommonly fine prospects, "but you see, after all, I have the advantage of you. At the moment, I grant, we appear to be in the same category; we've struggled through the season, doing no good for ourselves or for any one else; we've sown our seed of sight-seeing, idling, pleasure-seeking, call it what you will, and have reaped a plentiful crop of satiety. Good. But now comes the *per contra*. You have nothing before you but to go through the same agricultural process over again, while I have a project to carry out, involving not only honorable occupation, but profit and service to the common weal!"

"Ah, your Congressional scheme! I give you a twelvemonth to weary of that. You'll find a year of the sweet society of tinker, tailor, weaver, and bellows-maker, quite sufficient, believe me. The batch sent on last fall, after you arrived, indeed, will make a more charming Zoological Garden than ever."

"I've laid my plans, and must carry them out. You see Clyde, and Ingott, and Doke are all interested in my success—have all promised or sold their aid, and must not be disappointed. If I make a blunder, to me the penalty. But take a seat, a cigar, and a cup of coffee, and unfold the new pleasure."

"Briefly, then," said Clinton, accepting all three offers, "unlike our previous mundane joys, it contains nothing of the earth, earthy. It is to be enjoyed in a more pellucid element."

"In the air, I suppose?—*Chateaux en Espagne* or balloons?"

"Neither, good Œdipus. What say you to the sea? The open, bounding, tumbling, and all the rest of it, sea?"

"Not going abroad again?"

"Stupid! How can I leave my adorable, my blue-eyed maid—my inestimable Flora, just as the season comes when she strews the earth with flowers?"

"Perpend, then."

"Know that I am member of one society whose association involves neither the aid of Dokes nor Ingotts; which craves the countenance of neither *Optimist* nor *Pessimist;* which exists without the hand of the City Government to sustain, or the dirty fingers of Milesian politicians to pilfer; a society to which Neptune is the only god, and the voice of the sovereign people is as nothing."

"And which is called——"

"The Yacht Club, potent statesman; which creates and perfects most delicate, beautiful, and swift-winged engines, for flying far away from the pomps and vanities, the unclean streets and the unwashed population, the unseemly sights and the polluting smells of this worshipful city, all of which flourish most consumedly at the approach of the dog days; engines whereof the most delicate, the most beautiful, and the most swift-winged is now the heir-loom of the Parapets."

"Bravo! And you propose to take wing thereby and fly away?"

"Even so. Yet not prematurely. It is as yet too early in the season for a lengthy cruise, and our Regatta—yearly test of speed for the various craft—comes not until much later. But you must know that the Ariadne—such is the name of our beauty—has rivals; prominent among which is one built only last summer by Wirt Pinckney. His charmer, the Sylphide, was the winner last season when we were in Europe. Boastful with this success, he challenges me for a preliminary contest, to take place soon after the first of May, and I have taken up his gage."

"And how do the boats compare as to size?"

"As like as two peas. Indeed, Pinckney's was modelled directly from mine—a base imitation! Yet still there are one or two super-refined points whereupon our skipper believes the Ariadne still may keep her advantage. We're each about a hundred and fifty as to tonnage, and show canvas enough for two hundred. By-and-by, if you have leisure, I will show you some of the best shooting in the world, beyond the Capes

of Delaware. Meanwhile, with plenty of decent wine, provisions, and havànas to match, and a picked company, we'll have our race, and clear out the winter's cobwebs with an early taste of old ocean's champagne! What say you?"

"Oh, count on me, of course, and many thanks. That is to say, up to the first of June; afterwards, I believe, I belong to my country."

"Unhappy man! For about a month then you are free, and afterwards——"

"Afterwards, stump speaking, letter writing, vote conciliating; in a word, capital-making, until the period of the great struggle in the autumn."

"Appalling prospect! And at best, how lame and impotent the conclusion! However, it's no affair of mine, except as having a certain moderate lien on your society. Mind, you'll never find grace again in Edith's eyes when once you don the scurvy harness."

"I shall resort to unheard-of devices to make my peace. Besides, after all, I may fail."

"Not when Doke is interested in the result, believe me. Only you must not scrutinize his doings too closely. Ask no questions, and get no lies, will be his motto at election time."

"Still, the fight will be a sharp one; and, if defeated, pity may perhaps overcome the horror inspired by my crime."

Like many brothers, Clinton was blind to what scarcely any one else so close to the parties would have failed to suspect—his sister's partiality for Hugh Gifford. He liked him personally, and was gratified that the family had extended him, upon the indorsement of his introduction, rather unusual attentions. But, in addition to a general persuasion that no female Parapet, at least, could marry any one without a name, there was the common fraternal obtusity to aid in keeping him in the dark. Besides, he had heard of Hugh's engagement to Marian, which, although it had been little discussed between them, or much thought of by Clinton at all, would have directly suggested itself to his mind, had the possibility of any tender relation between Edith and Gifford once entered there.

"Edith shall be of our party," said Clinton, "and you can pave the way for your peace in advance."

"Agreed. I suppose some one else," added Hugh significantly, "will be of the party as well?"

"It will require management," replied Clinton, puffing blue rings speculatively into space, "but with adroitness it may be accomplished. Wirt, of course, will have lots of people, and so

shall we. We start from the same place at Hoboken, so that nothing more easy than a trifling mistake or two."

"I see. Only I think you're really playing a rather dangerous game. To amuse oneself is one thing, but to run a very great risk——"

"My dearfellow, one must have excitement, and where is there excitement when a man grows *blase*, save it includes some spice of danger?"

"But if the danger threatens a fatal catastrophe?"

"Nonsense! We play with pyrotechnics, not bomb-shells. Besides, after all, grave Mentor, what do you know about war?"

Gifford knew more about it, in his sense, than the excitement-loving Mr. Parapet supposed; but judiciously held his peace, content in his office of discreet adviser, with Clinton's assurances that nothing in the nature of grave hostilities was included in his prospective plans.

Both Marian and Edith had played during the winter a game in which womanly pride had more to do than purposed dissimulation. I do not mean to compare their characters. They were as unlike, in most respects, as two women well could be; but they shared in common this one particular resolution, that Gifford should not see, whatever his motives may have been, that his behavior had caused them any jealous pain as regards the other.

Edith felt, after hearing of his engagement, that she had permitted herself to become far more interested in Gifford than his conduct had justified, even if she had ever seriously contemplated relations to which, in truth, she had not given a thought. Still she did not quite estimate arightly the strength of that interest; and when she coolly laid down for herself the task of continuing to meet Hugh, and to conduct their intercourse precisely as if she had never felt toward him except as a friend, and that in a manner implying all their previous intercourse had been exactly of the same nature, and no other, she committed a serious error.

I hope it is unnecessary to say that Gifford was not a coxcomb. It was not needful that he should be one in order to be pleased with the obvious liking of a lovely, fashionable, and greatly admired young lady who had chosen to distinguish him from among a crowd of attending admirers, any of whom would have become for a look her willing slave. He thought she must know of his engagement, but that that knowledge did not prevent her —as indeed, why should it?—from regarding him as a friend.

True, the subject, strangely enough, was never mentioned between them; but this fact, if it presented itself, was quickly dismissed from his mind. He was, in a manner, intoxicated by the unaccustomed glitter, adulation, and luxury of his position, and his judgment was, for the time, stultified and disarmed.

It suited Edith, in spite of a real pain at heart, which might have taught her such a course was neither right nor politic, to have Gifford in attendance upon her at the opera, in the park, and at balls as much as ever. Her wishes conveyed in a hundred nameless ways received implicit obedience, and Hugh, without the least idea of doing an injustice to the noble girl he had asked to be his wife, wasl ulled into an impression by her silence—and if she were content, who had a right to object?—that everything in his conduct was confessedly, or tacitly, what it should be.

Thus matters ran on in the same groove, in the same routine, throughout the winter. Hugh attended Marian in society on one occasion, and Edith on another; escorted his *fiancee* to a ball to-night, drove in the park with Miss Parapet to-morrow. Of course remarks came at length in proper order; first of surprise, then irony, and, finally, condemnation. But Marian, although not altogether the Marian to Hugh she had been, while he, poor dazed fool, was all unconscious of the priceless treasure he was idly jeopardizing, was yet kind and patient, and tried now and then to rouse him from the ominous intellectual and moral lethargy into which he was sinking. This, after a season, she began to fear was hopeless; and, fatal change! although she loved him still, Hugh began to lose her respect. His perceptions were not filmed to this as to some other things, and his dislike of the delay she had stipulated for reinforced his annoyance at finding himself sinking in her esteem. Then came periods of coolness, distance, almost alienation, interrupted by bursts of passionate fondness, for he loved her very, very dearly; but the chasm between them had opened, the delicate feather of the wedge had entered, and these are things which neither narrow nor go backward.

Alas, for the wretched, wretched gold that was working so much misery! Alas, for the boon that poor Ike, in his simple gratitude, had striven so hard to bestow, thinking, poor innocent as he was, that the philosopher, Hugh Gifford, well knew what would buy him happiness!

Marian was kind and patient. But, although long-suffering and loving, she was a woman, and a very proud one. She was a woman with a torrent of hot Southern blood coursing through

her veins, which required all the force of an uncommonly well balanced brain to subjugate and control it. She said nothing during the months of the winter. Rumor, however painful and humiliating its whispers, she could afford to despise. At worst she could lay bare her mind to Gifford at the end of the year, and give him—oh, cruel, dismal thought!—the dismissal which pride, self-respect, his own happiness as it appeared, would render necessary.

She was kind and patient. But, when she heard repeated over and over again the deliberate statement of his engagement to Edith Parapet, her patience yielded at last, and she resolved to bring matters to an explicit understanding. Calmly, but with a heart nearly bursting from the effort of self-command, she told Gifford all she had heard. She offered to bring their engagement to an end then and there. She reminded him that to cover such a possibility of change, the year of probation had been agreed upon, and expressed her readiness to concede in terms what had thus been implied.

"Not for fear of my own constancy," she said, "did I make that stipulation. Let it meet the contingency for which it was intended. I can share no man's heart, would deprive no other of a fraction of it. I do not blame you, her, any one, only this must come to an end. Your hold on my esteem had been the greater, were it ended before. The love of such a woman, so situated, with such advantages, such position, such aspirations, may be better suited to your altered prospects than mine could have been. Let it be so, but let there be no division, no parcelling out in shares, of love and affection. Let it end—once—now, and forever!"

There was no mistaking the flashing eye, the outstretched arm, the erect, lithe figure, all quivering as it was, the heaving bust, which responded as unmistakably as her expressive face itself to any powerful emotion. There was no mistake as to her resolution or purpose, and Hugh made none. He was astonished, confounded, for the explosion had been long in coming—so long, when just as great a reason existed, so far as his conscience could advise him, for it to burst forth, that it seemed amazing it should burst forth at all. But he loved Marian very dearly. And, open to enervating influences as he might be, as unhappily he had shown himself to be, there was that in Gifford which ever made him rise so as to be equal to any occasion, however great, to face any dilemma, however bewildering.

Marian was in no mood to be readily pacified. She became

so, however, before he left her. He protested the entire falsity of the story she had heard. It had color, without doubt; he had been heedless, foolish, vain, but not intentionally guilty, nor deliberately disloyal. Edith was a most attractive person, a most brilliant one, but never, never could she have inspired the love he felt for Marian. Nor did he believe she had the remotest thought of inspiring it. It was a blunder, a stupid, meaningless blunder, which should be at once corrected and atoned. He would cease to visit altogether at the Parapets; take any steps—Marian should herself dictate them, and they should be religiously observed.

Most of these asseverations Hugh delivered very appropriately on his knees; delivered them with all the eloquence, the passion, and, above all, the sincerity which the critical nature of the emergency demanded, and he earned his reprieve. But, although her resolutions were beaten down, her suspicions lulled, her confidence revived by the fiery ardor, the outpoured explanations of her repentant lover, Marian's feelings had received a shock which caused their reconciliation to partake more of the nature of a truce than of a lasting peace. Fire there must be where so much smoke had been; it was for the future to show whether it was to be altogether extinguished.

CHAPTER XIX.

New York enjoys one supreme advantage more important than its many others, and which will go further to make it great as the years roll on than all the rest combined: it is washed on all sides by the salt sea. Neptune strives hard to undo the dirty work of civic councillors, by sweeping with his purifying surge through the quays and slips and wharfs, and thus, at least twice during the day, he makes sweet and wholesome the water and air which defective drainage and cloudless skies have done so much to pollute. It is one of the numerous instances in this country where nature does so much to confer blessings which are quietly cited as proofs of the wisdom of man.

What a glorious harbor! Swelled with the volume of the magnificent Hudson, the inner bay affords an expanse of full five-and twenty square miles, whose entrance, like that of San

Francisco, is through a portal of scarcely one in width. Gemmed with green islets, circled with purple hills, brimming with the tributary floods of the mountain region to the North, guarded at throat and channel-line by sweeps of snowy ramparts where the starry banner floats over hundreds of heavy guns, there are few places on earth whose approach inspires such ideas of space and beauty and strength as does New York harbor. There is not, truly, the majesty of distant pinnacle and mountain top which keep guard over its occidental sister; but there is a variety, an extent and a panoramic effect of undulating and cultivated loveliness which are all its own.

Beyond the Narrows rolls the far Atlantic. In the sultry midsummer days, when the thermometer rises to a hundred degrees in the shade, pleasure or health seekers may leave the city piers, and, in less than an hour, be drinking the inspiriting breezes from the great reservoir of the open sea; a blessed privilege, as those who have been able to enjoy it can well attest. But there are days long before midsummer when the air hangs still and murky about the island city, and when a draught of fresh air from the sea is a grateful tonic to its denizens; days when a foretaste of what July and August are to bring is afforded by a close, thick atmosphere, which dims the sun without showing any definite cloud; days when subtle and mysterious odors steal about the cross streets which run to the rivers, and occasionally venture into Broadway, to remind people of a prospective luxury so abundant in the solstice of Sirius.

It was on such a day, when a gray veil hung over the town, although the sky and sea beyond the Narrows were of a laughing blue, that some of our friends were to be found on the deck of the Ariadne, standing outwards about S. S. E. from Sandy Hook. At about a cable's length abeam glided the Sylphide, the air just filling her towering canvas, while her pennon and streamers now flew straight from their halyards, and anon fell idly and fluttered by their sides.

It was two o'clock, and they had been waiting since nine for such a breeze as would give fair opportunity for the projected trial of speed. Earlier in the day it had been well-nigh calm, so that all the enormous spread of sail the two yachts could show had been needed to force them slowly through a sea like a mill-pond, which reached from Fort Hamilton to the Battery.

Outside the Narrows, delicate little waves were tumbling and wrestling merrily in the sun-beams, but the zephyrs hardly ruffled their crests, and the sun was falling before there was wind enough to keep the sails full without that intermittent flapping backwards

so discordant to the ears of expectant yachtsmen, and, ah! how far more so to those who have long voyages before them. By four bells however, for nothing else would the bluejackets of a day call two o'clock, the breeze freshened, and the craft were running about five knots as they made long tacks back and forth athwart the Hook. When the sun should fall an hour or two lower, the wind was confidently expected to freshen into a stiff breeze, and the race was to be from the Hook straight through the Narrows, and around the lighthouse on Robbin's Reef.

If neatness and elegance could make a schooner swift, the Ariadne should surely have been second to none. Nothing could exceed the beauty of her run, the taper grace of her spars, the compact finish of her wood-work, the taut simplicity of her rigging. Neither, to descend from externals, could more luxury and convenience have been united than were to be found in her cabin. The furniture, the tiny state-rooms, the miniature rack of arms, the lockers, the table gear, were each as perfect of their kind as they well could be. There was every appearance then, both alow and aloft, of the most sagacious and comprehensive adaptation of means to ends; and an acute observer would have found such evidences of success in aught she might undertake about the Ariadne, that nought could have made him doubt of it until he had seen the Sylphide. That rival vessel, in truth, seemed quite as perfect; and, untried as both were, no means remained to settle their respective pretensions, save the practical test on which their owners now alike were bent.

Bang went Mr. Pinckney's swivel for about the tenth time since noon.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Clinton Parapet, "Wirt grows impatient as the day gets older; but we'll cool his zeal before sundown, unless the saucy Ariadne falls far short of her promise."

"No fear, sir," said John Brime, ex-New York pilot, and now skipper of the Ariadne, "if we only get wind. We're nigh enough alike to be sisters, save and exceptin' allus she is a few thavins lighter aloft. Jest the odds that we kin kerry our upper story kites when she'll have to haul her'n."

"That is to say, in a light breeze she has the advantage, you think?"

"You see, sir, she draws a thought to windward of us. This air, light as it is, is flawy. When it puffs up we hold our own, and something better. But the difference 'll be in kerryin' all in a stiffish blow."

"Old Boreas is too sedate for that to-day, I fear."

"I don't know that, sir. That smoke yonder that's been hug-

gin' Long Island all the mornin' like a sweetheart, is a curlin' i outer edges like a tickled caterpillar. Jest see it hist there, s to the north'ard and east'ard; and see that ribbon of clear da blue opening under the haze!"

"And that's wind, is it?"

"Enough to make the water bile under our keel afore sundow or I'm a lubber. Howsumever, it's easier to say it than to mal it come, and seein's believin'. Ease away a bit on that jib-shee will ye, Jim? The wind's a pint free, and ye've got her as tig as a drum."

The two schooners *were* very much alike, in length and i symmetry, in the moulding of their runs, and the extreme shar ness of their bows; alike in the cut and size of their sails, and i the sumptuous fittings of their cabins; alike in the inviting r pasts spread in their cabins, and plenteously flanked by cost wines. But in respect of their passengers the resemblance ce tainly ceased. These aquatic excursions not uncommonly brin together rather incongruous assemblages, and this was no excep tion. By an ingenious tissue of misrepresentations and evasion Clinton had managed to get his sister on board, in ignorance tha Flora Dimity was to be of the party; nor did she detect wha she certainly would have resented by refusing to go, until th yacht was irrevocably on her way. The same device cost Clin ton the company of Hugh Gifford. Mr. Rivingstone and Ma rian were of Pinckney's party; and after what had passed, ou hero of course was bound to be of the same or neither. On boar the Sylphide, too, was Mr. Salathiel Doke, although nobod knew who invited him; and Mr. Gollop, who scarcely ever quit ted Gifford now, either night or day.

Moreover, the same party included, besides several pretty girls chaperoned by a suitable elder of the Pinckney set, Mr. Clyde who had returned to town after settling the affairs of the Stat at Rochester, and Mr. Blobb, who was making an elaborate repor of the beauties and dimensions of the Sylphide for the column of the *Centurion*.

On the other hand, the Ariadne boasted the society of Mr Bladderly Flytte, who, unmindful of the Drierly rebuke, ha obtained permission to introduce his friends, Mr. Randolph Bur gee and Mr. Walsingham Scuttle; a couple of Drierly Shade who, in the absence of pa, were not disinclined to receive atter tion from those wretched malefactors; divers dignified Parape ian connections, chiefly sea-sick; and a representative of th *Optimist*, who smuggled himself on board by observing that h was a friend of Mr. Gifford's, who had appointed to meet hi

here, a statement which a little reflection would have persuaded Clinton was untrue, but that he was occupied just at the time in admiring those lovely blonde curls of Flora Dimity's which stole so bewitchingly from under her hat.

There were these additional points of resemblance between the two yachts, that the conversation on board both chiefly ran on the probable chances of beating the other in the expected contest, and that the copious libations of Messrs. Gollop, Doke, and the representative of the *Centurion* were fairly paralleled by Messrs. Burgee, Scuttle, and the representative of the *Optimist*, with this difference, that whereas the first-named couple became, as a result, more thick of speech and more disagreeably familiar as the day wore on, the Southerners only grew more distinct and more studiously punctilious—a philosophical enigma which those who choose may investigate.

"I was down on that 'ere island," observed Mr. Gollop, pointing to a line of white sand as he thirstily disposed of his dozenth cocktail, "with the city authorities, to a clambake last fall; and three o' the aldermen got loaded on apple-jack, and fell asleep in a bath-house, they did. So we jest capsized 'em, doors down, and poured pails o' water all over the top, lettin' on that the tide was comin' in; and whilst the rest on 'em was hollerin' 'murder' and 'let me out,' old Pete M'Snarley sings out, 'If that's so, jest, for God's sake, do put the kag of apple-jack aboard, and let 'em go to sea all serene.' Jack is Pete's bait, jack is."

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared the appreciative Doke. "That was about the time they all voted for the Madison Gridiron Bill, weren't it! Dan O'Gorrill swears you wouldn't let 'em out till they promised to vote the thing through fire and water, if need was; and that they all made oath to't, then and there, with the kag o' jack for a Bible."

"It took more'n the kag o' jack," said Mr. Gollop, grimly, "you'd better believe. But them stories do very well to pass among the boys. Men o' their kind love their rum, but they don't bait on rum exclusive. If they did I'd be better off—or wuss." With which bewildering statement, Mr. Gollop lit a cigar, and again prepared to "smile."

"Do you understand their jargon?" asked Eldon Clyde, remarking that Hugh seemed to overhear the conversation just described; for they stood by an open skylight which rose from the cabin through the quarter-deck.

"Quite well enough, I believe; both gentlemen have favored me with abundance of it of late."

"And what do you think of them?" pursued Clyde, with a

grave smile, "candidly now, and, of course, between ourselves?"

"Candidly then, I think them fair specimens of a class, unhappily too numerous, who make a complete trade of the weaknesses and crimes of their fellow-men; and who utilize universal suffrage in the most profitable manner, by buying and selling the poor rapscallions whom it places in office. I have undertaken to do something wherein you tell me their services may be made valuable, but I cannot the less despise them, or regret the workings of a system which invites the existence of such a class, and renders their misdeeds possible."

"Yet you are not unwilling to buy their help?" queried the older man, archly.

"Very unwilling," replied Gifford, reddening; "but disliking to undertake a project and then to abandon it—ignorant of the *modus operandi*, and so forced to depend on the teachings of others—I strive to reconcile my conscience to an application of the maxim that, being at Rome, I may do as Romans do."

"Come," said Clyde, more seriously, "the system is not so bad after all. What you justly condemn is notoriously prevalent in our large seaboard cities, where is massed a vast immigrant population, but there is little or none of it in the greater part of the country—the vast agricultural interior. Our theory lies in choosing the lesser of two evils, or rather, so to speak, in overcoming a considerable urban evil by a preponderating rural good. I'm not one of those who think that ethics and politics can be made utterly distinct, still you cannot make them convertible terms. The gist of the whole matter is, that when everything is said and done, the moral, steadfast and homogeneous country always out-votes, and consequently controls the brawling, giddy, and hybrid town."

"I ought to go into political life in the country," said Hugh, thoughtfully, "if at all."

"Why, to tell you the truth," said Mr. Clyde, laughing, "I think you would find it more congenial. Only if you ask my opinion or advice as to what these civic fuglemen can do for you, I give it, mind not ethically, but politically."

"And if a lady's opinion were ever likely to be asked upon such a profound subject," laughed Marian, for the speakers had come close to where she was seated during their discussion, "I should offer as mine, that whoso toucheth pitch shall be defiled!"

"Alas, fayre ladye!" said the politician, with a courtly bow, "the dirty work of the nation must be done by some one, and I

need not tell so thoughtful an observer that we cannot all be Parapets."

A blush rose to the lovely face, which was not altogether one of pleasure, and Hugh looked a little embarrassed.

"Must the work needs be of such a description," asked Marian with her simple straightforwardness, "because not done by Parapets?"

"I'll tell you one thing, Miss Rooke, which won't be done by a Parapet," cried Wirt Pinckney, coming up in great good humor, "and that is, to beat the Sylphide!"

"You feel sure of that, Mr. Pinckney? Take care! Over-confidence is no augur of success."

"Oh, I don't reckon without my host. Our blue jackets tell me that we can beat them famously in light winds, and it seems we are to have no other. Their top-hamper is weightier than ours, they say, and if the breeze steadies, we shall draw away from them in no time."

"Bravo!" cried Eldon Clyde. "There's nothing like being on the winning side."

"Especially," amended Marian, "especially, Mr. Clyde, if it's the right one."

"Ah, stern moralist, you did not hear Mr. Gifford and me just now drawing distinctions between politics and ethics."

"Distinctions! If you do indeed draw them, it suggests an explanation which has often puzzled me."

"As to what?"

"The reason why politicians object to let women vote."

"You shall vote here, Miss Rooke," said Pinckney, "and carry the election, though you be in a minority. Shall it be Chambertin or Champagne? 'Tis long past noon, and we haven't spliced the main brace—quite an indispensable ceremony for sailors."

"Why then, Chambertin, Mr. Pinckney; much the more sober and unpretending, and the Sylphide makes foam and sparkle enough as it is."

"Champagne for me," quoth Mr. Rivingstone, gaily. "My older blood can stand a fillip, and be none the worse."

"Bravo!" cried Clyde; "I'll join you so as to have an ally against your fair ward, who seeks to punish me for all the sins, omitted or committed, of the day."

"Nay, that isn't fair," urged Marian; "only for those of which you avow yourself the champion."

"Let me be your Ganymede, Miss Rooke," solicited Mr. Blobb, drawn irresistibly to the spot by the popping of Cham-

pagne corks, "if not your champion. I'll take the humbler post rather than interfere with so many doughty candidates."

"For shame, Blobb!" said Wirt Pinckney; "I thought yours was only a temperance journal—in point of fact, a teetotaller!"

"Ah, Mr. Pinckney, you must give us poor scribblers a little latitude—at least on salt water."

"Take your Champagne, Blobb," advised Mr. Clyde, "and may it make your report more sparkling."

"The subject needs no stimulus," returned Blobb, gallantly, "but I'll do my best."

"Angels can no more," cried Pinckney. "Here's to Blobb's best!"

"Champagne and oysters," remarked Mr. Gollop, heralding his approach with an audible aside, "Champagne and oysters is Blobb's baits, they are. When I want to capture Blobb, I say, 'Champagne and oysters,' and he nibbles quicker'n a wink."

"Ha! ha! ha!" cachinnated Mr. Doke; "I heard somethin' drop, Mr. Pinckney, and I'm always in at the death!"

"Quite right, Mr. Doke. Steward, more Champagne! I do believe they're trying to put another gaff-topsail on the Ariadne. Miss Rooke, will you kindly propose a toast?"

"With much pleasure. And may it prove more than a toast—a prophecy! Here's success to the Sylphide!"

"*Omnes.* Hip! Hip! Hurrah!"

Boom! boom! boom! went three great guns from Fort Hamilton, far away to the northward. Some man-of-war was coming out. And bang replied the Sylphide's tiny brass bull-dog on her forecastle. The cheer was plainly regarded as a defiance on board the Ariadne, for presently was heard echoing faintly across the water a hurrah in reply. In a moment after, there came cleaving swiftly through the waters of the Narrows, and firing gun after gun from port and starboard battery, in response to the salutation of the forts, a great war-steamer, outward bound.

"We are in august neighborhood," said Clyde, as he counted the reports. "She carries an ambassador."

"I don't like this 'ere wastin' money and burnin' powder for empty forms," criticized Mr. Gollop. "We don't ketch nothin' by it. It don't set us ahead any, that folks fires back. I don't see the good on't."

"Perhaps not," returned Clyde, coolly; "but you see we find it prudent to respect the representatives of other nations if we don't respect our own."

"*I* don't keer how much you keep on respectin' of 'em,"

muttered Gollop as he turned away, "not a cuss, so long as it don't cost nuthin'."

"A very fair commentary on much of our popular democracy," said Hugh Gifford, bitterly, "which grudges all that may give dignity to the nation abroad, and nothing which may encourage corruption at home. A liberal outfit for a foreign minister is decried as anti-republican; and more money is literally stolen every year from the people to enrich greasy politicians in the city of New York alone, than would double the salaries of every United States minister, commissioner, secretary or consul, the nation maintains abroad."

"See, we shall not want for company up the bay," cried Marian, pointing seaward. The weather had been nearly calm for a day or two before, and, indeed, the breeze was but light now. Still it had been sufficient to gather scores of inward-bound craft, who were now closing in on the eastern horizon from every direction, and making what had been an hour or two before but a lonely blue line, populous with silvery sails.

Meanwhile, on board the Ariadne, rather less hilarity prevailed than with the company of the Sylphide, since there were to be found there not only less ease, but more conflicting elements to harmonize. To assuage Edith's annoyance at what she regarded as a deception practised upon her, and, at the same time to make ardent love to Flora Dimity; to entertain his other guests, and to watch the performance of his schooner, constituted an aggregate of duties which might have taxed even a person of habitually industrious habits; and much more onerous were they to a gentleman so exclusively versed in doing nothing. Both Clinton and Edith were irritated by the absence of Gifford, although for manifestly different reasons. It had been at first arranged that he was to be of the Ariadne party; and not until the time of departure was Clinton informed that Hugh found it necessary to make a change, while Edith was ignorant of it for some time after. The schooners were often quite near enough to each other, however, to forestall the need of explanations, since all on the deck of one were recognizable from that of the other.

"Pray, Edith, acquit me of any blame in the matter," at whispered Clinton, knowing well how wise it would be for him to make his peace before reaching home. "There was a mistake, you see; Gifford was to be with us, and Miss Dimity was to go with Pinckney."

"The latter I disbelieve, so don't repeat it; as to the former, if Mr. Gifford made an engagement, which he afterwards chose

to break, it is a question for him to settle with his own sense of politeness, and certainly nothing to me."

"He did not break it, not strictly, for he apologized amply before the carriage brought you down, and explained——"

"Well, what?"

"That it was important he should see Clyde, who will only be in town for two days, and the opportunity was too good to be missed, and so——"

"Mr. Clyde could not possibly be asked on board the Ariadne?"

"On the contrary, he was; but Pinckney happened to ask him first; that's all. Now, like a dear, charming sister as you are, do be a little civil to this poor *migonne*, whom you've frightened half out of her wits with your stately ways, and I'll swear to obey you in anything for a month to come—there!" And Clinton flew away to say something civil to pretty Flora, himself, by way of *avant courier*.

"Monstrous strange, Miss Parapet!" observed Mr. Walsingham Scuttle, "that Pinckney should have those very odd people, Gollop and Doke, of his party! Why, I'm told they're almost disreputable?"

"They are not of the *elite*, certainly," said Edith; "but the Pinckneys are a trifle more allied with political circles than ourselves; and I suppose they find it to their account to endure its penalties now and again. For my part, I could never believe the game paid for the candle."

"I should say not, indeed. Why, they are perfect boors! Quite unresentable, and——"

"Hist! I beg pardon; but I feared Miss Drierly might hear you."

One of the Shades had indeed just glided towards the cabin door, her customary sallow modifying ominously to a delicate green,

"Thanks. I know the creatures visit there; and it seemed to me to be equally odd."

"The same reason. They have great strength, great influence with the masses; one through political connections, the other through a heavy and unscrupulous purse."

"Ah, those are implements which, in our, section are usually wielded by gentlemen."

"But your section doesn't invite immigration. *Voila tout.* However, you'll find Mr. Flytte a capital authority in these mysteries."

"Pardon, for boring you with so dry a subject. You know I

am quite a neophyte in Northern politics, and too eager to be instructed. May I not bring you some fruit, or a glass of wine?"

"Pray take nothing, dear Miss Parapet," urged Miss Drierly, reappearing from the cabin, and looking somewhat more composed. "We are to have luncheon presently, and it looks so excessively nice! Really, Mr. Parapet has an exquisite taste in these things."

Mr. Parapet piqued himself on his taste in most things—especially in the article of pretty blonds—and he was exhibiting it at the moment, on the opposite side of the deck, with admirable *empressement*.

"A golden sunset!" he murmured, echoing a suggestion from the lovely creature in the blue hat beside him, and who looked as if she were floating in azure muslin draperies. "Oh, yes; and a beautiful one, no doubt; yet not so beautiful a gold as certain fairy tresses I know of!"

"Nonsense," blushed the conscious Flora; "nonsense, Mr. Parapet; how can there possibly be a comparison between the sky and——hair?"

"Quite right, I agree perfectly. What I meant to convey was, that there certainly could be none!"

"Flatterer!"

"There can be no flattery in the cold statement of a physical fact. Now, the deep, melting blue of yonder sky——"

"Clinton," cried Edith, from the other side, "I should like to show Miss Dimity those aquatic views you said were in the saloon, if you will permit me; and since Miss Drierly declares luncheon to be nearly ready, we may, perhaps, as well retire!"

The gentlemen all raised their hats, and Miss Parapet bore off the simpering beauty in triumph.

"What can Parapet see to admire in that doll-faced girl?" marvelled, *sotto voce*, Mr. Burgee, who had hay-colored hair and no-colored eyes.

"Doll-faced girl!" repeated Mr. Scuttle, a Spanish-looking man, with raven hair and flashing eyes of jet. "Why, she's a perfect Hebe!"

"*De gustibus*, et cetera, et cetera," said Mr. Flytte, as he threw the stump of his cigar into the bubbling waters, and finished the last stanzas of that "Ode to the Sea," which his brother bard Prodder afterwards criticized so savagely—and so anonymously—in the columns of the sparkling *Sidebard*.

"Fearfully hot it's getting," said Clinton, thus bereft of his idol. "Why, what the deuce!" he cried more hastily, "what's the matter, Brime? We seem to be at a stand-still!"

"That's jest it, sir. The wind's dropping us like a hot potato; and look! the Sylphide's becalmed as well! I was afeerd 'twould be so, pervided it didn't freshen. It'll stay like this maybe till sundown, and then come out stiff from somewhere's else—most like from the north'ard."

The wind had indeed fallen very suddenly, and the gray veil which had lifted somewhat from the northern horizon seemed to be quietly settling down again for the night. The Sylphide lay at about a hundred yards from her consort, whose sails and streamers were fluttering sluggishly against her rigging, and which seemed otherwise motionless. The two schooners had been making, as has been said, long stretches in lines at a right angle to the projection of Sandy Hook, and the breeze had left them two or three miles away from it. For a while the water appeared to dance and eddy about them, thus giving some life and vivacity to the scene. But soon, from a counteracting action of the tide, it became apparently as torpid and motionless as the yachts themselves, each of which now lay becalmed—"like a painted ship upon a painted ocean."

Under these circumstances, the voyagers did what people are very apt to do when thus imprisoned in hopeless passivity, betook themselves to the dinner-table for such consolation as they might find. And in neither case was there any room for disappointment; for, whatever Clinton's taste or liberality in such matters, Wirt Pinckney was no whit behind him; so that a couple of hours passed away very pleasantly, and there being not enough movement to cause inconvenience even to the most delicate, the ladies got on as happily as their companions.

The two hours having passed, however, and the parties having returned to their respective decks, prospects did not appear quite so cheerful. It was now past six o'clock, and the sun was going down, not in gold, but in a bank of sullen, leaden-looking clouds. The horizon was thickly dotted with vessels as motionless as their own, and with glasses it could be seen that no flag on any of the distant forts was lifted by even an exceptional puff of air. All hung drooping, dull, and spiritless.

As the sun sank behind the cloud-bank which covered his point of departure on the horrizon, the windless air grew chilly, so that Edith Parapet was glad to don a crimson burnous to eke out the warmth of her gauzy muslin; an example which the ladies on board the two yachts were not slow to follow. Meanwhile, both Captain Brime and the skipper of the Sylphide, ill-pleased with the ominous calm which surrounded them, had shortened their towering canvas until fore and mainsails were under close reefs,

and nothing was seen forward but the scantiest possible apologies for jibs. The work was done in each vessel simultaneously, so that both were in what Brime called their fighting rig at the same moment.

Whether due to a vague presentiment of coming danger or simply to curiosity, the ladies and gentlemen of the yachts viewed these preparations in absolute silence. It seemed a melancholy and foreboding evening to follow so gay and sprightly a day; but the silence was so deep, so oppressive, that the slightest movement of block or tackle from either vessel smote on the ears of those on board the other as if it must needs be within reach of their hands.

Presently the darkness grew denser, and on the horizon delicate ribbons of blue lightning began playing and dancing fantastically, while, as if in reproof, hoarse and distant, but perfectly audible, the thunder began to mutter and roll in company.

"How silent they are on board the Ariadne!" said Marian breathlessly to Gifford; "I could see Miss Parapet sitting by the bulwark in a crimson shawl by that light, and a group around her as pale and speechless as herself. Strange they should keep so very still!"

"I dare say they think the same of us," answered Hugh, laughing, "since your voice is the first I have heard for full ten minutes!"

"What, Mr. Pinckney!" cried Eldon Clyde. "You haven't brought us here to offer up so many sacrifices to the fishes of New York Bay!"

"Heaven forbid! Our bark is staunch enough, no doubt, and my only regret is that of keeping the ladies in the night air; but we must wait, perforce, the pleasure of the elements."

The conversation grew general, and, thus encouraged, voices from the Ariadne emulated the example. But in a few minutes longer a far brighter flash of lightning blinded all eyes, succeeded by a heavy crash of thunder, while a long low wail of wind quickly followed the explosion, giving menace of its speedy approach. Upon this, all the speakers were silent again. Marian, indeed, whispered:

"Do you think there is any danger?"

And Hugh, with a brave memory in his heart, replied, "And if there should be, I can answer for one woman not to fear it, whatever may be said of the men!"

A great rush of wind was close at hand, and a sharp shout from the Ariadne was echoed back from the Sylphide, as from the same voice. "Stand by the halyards!" from the skippers,

and "Ay, ay, sir!" from the tiny crews, sounded strangely to most other ears; but the precaution was quite necessary, for in an instant the squall was upon them, bowing both the light craft nearly to their gunwales, and straining their scanty sails almost to bursting.

"If this capful only holds as 'tis, sir," said John Brime, as, clenching the tiller of the Ariadne in his brawny hands, he carefully humored the gallant little craft through the blinding strain of the squall, "'twill sweep us clear by Lafayette in less than a jiffey. We won't let go nuthin' till it pipes up higher than this."

Both boats behaved very well, and stood up sturdily after the first onset of the blast, which was now driving them at a furious rate through the water. As had been expected, the Ariadne took and kept the lead, although of course all idea of racing was now banished from the minds of both parties of passengers. In an incredibly short space the yachts had traversed most of the stretch which had lain between them and the coast of Long Island; but, in order to get through the Narrows, and pass to the westward of Fort Lafayette, it was evidently necessary to tack. The wind, blowing with great violence as it was, had shifted one or two points ahead, and so suddenly that it was only obvious at the last moment that the manœuvre in question was not only unavoidable, but must be executed under rather critical circumstances.

Not far in the wake of the Ariadne flew onward her consort, and perhaps it was well that, at the moment the former went round like a top, as her prow was driven into the wind, a series of brilliant flashes lit up the scene, although the volleying thunder which ensued drowned the voices which essayed to shout their orders. Still the task to be performed was so manifest to the three or four skillful tars who worked the Sylphide that no harm was done, and her helm was down and her sails shivering in the wind directly after her leader's.

But in the interval a piercing, an appalling cry rang in the ears of those on the deck of the hindmost vessel. When it ceased, the Ariadne was on the other tack and flying like an arrow from the spot she had filled an instant before. It had burst forth at the moment the great boom of her mainsail had swung with a crash to the larboard. Marian Rooke heard in that cry another which mingled with it—a wild, despairing cry of "Edith! Edith!" which came down on the gale and was swallowed in the darkness. She saw, too, by the vivid gleam of the lightning, a crimson mass floating away to leeward on the

crest of the rushing billows; and she saw, the next instant, that Hugh Gifford had left her side, and plunged straight into the sea.

CHAPTER XX.

It was some moments before either of the yachts could be so far controlled by the frantic efforts of their crews as to retrace the path they had so swiftly described just before. The race was now for a graver stake, however, than any on board had contemplated when they set sail that sultry morning, and their exertions were commensurate with its dreadful importance.

It was some moments, although it seemed an age to those most interested in the result, before the Sylphide could make her way back to the spot where Gifford had leaped into the foaming waters; and, when she did so, the fast-ebbing tide, pressed tumultously by a gale which now blew directly down the channel, had carried the objects of her search some distance out to sea.

Battling desperately with the waves, Gifford had made his way to the crimson guide which fortunately made Edith's position so conspicuous even in the obscurity, that it was not difficult to find her. Time courses with awful speed in these cases. Many a poor wretch has drowned in the space inevitably taken in putting about the ship whence he had fallen. The yachts, however, were handy, and despite the resistance of the elements, they fought their way quickly to the rescue. Presently the whole scene was illumined by blue lights burning from both their decks, feeble competitors with the flashes of lightning indeed, but more steady. And now two life-preservers are within Hugh's reach, lashed to lines running from the Sylphide's taffrail as she hurtles by. Again she is thrown into the wind; he has made one of the buoyant rings fast under Edith's arms, and in a few moments more both are drawn in safety over the bulwarks.

Edith was quite senseless. The gun, the rocket, and the glad cheer which outrang for an instant the howl of the wind, and told her brother of her rescue, conveyed no sound to her ears. But she was living, breathing; of that there could be no doubt. "In tender hands of those of her own sex, and with proper restoratives, applied in the comfortable cabin, she would soon recover," said Eldon Clyde; and he said truly. As for Hugh, he was

quite self-possessed, although greatly exhausted; and dry clothes and a little hot brandy and water would doubtless be all-sufficient to remedy any ill effects from his bath.

Congratulations flew thick and fast at so happy an ending to the adventure; and as, in a briefer space than the whole had taken, both schooners were laid on the other tack, and with a short stretch attained the comparatively smooth surface of the inner bay, while Clinton's anxious hails had received the most reassuring and satisfactory replies, there really seemed only room for unmingled joy.

And yet this joy was dashed with bitterness; an affair which, promising as it did to end in a terrible catastrophe, and rendered apparently harmless by an act of promptness and courage, was yet destined to evolve results fraught with pain to several of the personages of our story; for it led to an incident, which, however induced by a train of most natural circumstances, was yet of a character which people in certain relations are seldom persuaded is susceptible of misconstruction.

When Edith was drawn on board she was carried directly into the cabin, and, all unconscious as she was, laid upon a couch near the door. Hither the ladies and gentlemen crowded with injudicious but natural solicitude, while Marian, with a practical good sense which seldom deserted her, had flown for hot water to the little galley forward, leaving the stewardess, who happily had changes of her own, to arrange dry clothes as substitutes for the drenched garments which the half-drowned girl had worn.

In the mean time, when one young lady was supporting her head, another striving to pour wine between her pale lips, and Mr. Rivingstone doing his best to keep a space clear about her, Edith suddenly opened her eyes, and, in accents of terror, shrieked:

"He—Hugh! He has saved me! He is lost himself! Where—where is he?"

At which Wirt Pinckney ran hastily to fetch Gifford, and thrust him streaming with salt water into the anxious circle; whereat Edith, with a scream of joy, cried:

"Safe! safe! Thank God! thank God! Dear—dear Hugh is safe!" And, clasping her arms about his neck, she straightway fainted at the moment that Marian entered, in time to hear the ejaculations and to see the accompanying tableau.

The cabin was speedily cleared, and our hero relieved from his rather embarrassing situation; while Marian, tending Edith like a sister, soon had the satisfaction to see her conscious and comfortable. But, all engrossed in such feminine cares as she was,

and which prevented her dwelling for the time upon aught else, Marian felt she had witnessed what could neither be explained away nor forgotten ; what, as she believed, must have had its origin in foregone conclusions, incompatible alike with Hugh's truth and her own future happiness.

Now, the explanation of the affair was very simple. Torture could not have wrung from Edith Parapet those expressions of fondness which, off her guard, unnerved, shaken and dismayed as she was, had only half wittingly escaped her. Apprehensions lest her preserver had fallen a victim to the magnanimity which led him to risk his life to preserve her own, had given birth to an outburst which was in truth as surprising to Gifford as it was to any one else who heard it. But how many women are there who would credit such an explanation were it offered ? Marian was resolved to seek none. She put her own construction upon what she had witnessed, and steeled herself in the conviction that there could absolutely be no other. Fate had decided that she was to stumble in good season upon the evidence of her lover's duplicity, and had thus guarded her against making shipwreck, not only of her happiness, but most probably of his own.

For Edith was very lovely. No one could look upon her, even now, pale and bowed like a broken lily, with the hauteur which was so marked a characteristic, and, in her case, so becoming a one, all subdued, awkwardly draped in unseemly garments as she was, and not perceive that she must be, under favorable circumstances, supremely captivating.

And Marian had been subjected of late to sore trials. She had been condemned to hear in bitter silence reports which were humiliating to her pride, fatal to her peace. In the excitement, the enthusiasm of an explanation when all his better feelings had been roused, when every dear old memory of the past had been evoked to awaken his imagination and buttress his loyalty, Hugh had indeed denied the truth of these reports. But Marian was not without experience in matters of the heart. She had been taught betimes, " when the blood burns, how prodigal the soul lends the tongue vows." How did Hugh's denial look in the light of what had been revealed to her—in the light of Edith's evidently not unsought or unreturned affection ?

He was ambitious too ; and the sin by which angels fell might easily prove too strong for the faith of one whose youth had been cankered—embittered—warped into reserve, if not into double-dealing, by early surroundings and misdirections. The temptation to ally himself with so proud a family, as the step-

ping-stone to social and political success, had been too strong for him, and he had fallen. Should she judge harshly? No, a hundred times, no. His behavior might have been unjustifiable, nay, criminal; but he had much to struggle withal in his own breast as well as in the outer world, and she knew, when she first had loved him, the imperfections of his character.

Marian had enjoyed many hours of almost unalloyed bliss. When Gifford and she first met after their separation—when he had poured into her willing ear the story so long pent up in his breast of deep and passionate love—when he pictured how for many a day it had dwelt there, on the prairie, in the mines, when she was yet in his sight; in all his wanderings by land and sea since they had been parted—she had believed, and believed with a rush of happiness that was almost unearthly, in the literal truth of his protestations. Why should she not? She knew she was beautiful. It was mere affectation on her part to ignore it. She knew herself accomplished; it was a naked fact, which whoever ran might read. She knew herself young and attractive in a social sense; experience teaches to average intellects a lesson in this wise not readily misconstrued. Why, then, should she not be loved? Again and again she asked herself this question. Why should not Hugh Gifford love her as dearly as he swore he did?

On this day a wretched shiver came over the girl, for an answer smote suddenly upon her mind which, strange to say, in connection with Gifford, had never occurred to it before. An answer which was bound up and interwoven with the most painful recollections of her life, which was, perhaps, the cause why it had been hidden away in the recesses of her memory only to be tortured forth by a calamity which brought something of the same burthen of sorrow. This was the secret, she began to persuade herself, of her lover's alienation. He had lived among people of high thoughts of late—people of fastidious tastes—and they had engendered or stimulated in his mind a prejudice which had been absent or feeble before.

Wandering like Nature's own children in her luxuriant forests, sitting side by side on mossy banks which bordered her lakes and streams of crystal, finding health and safety, and plenty, while trusting to her and her alone; hearing whispers and suggestions from her lips and from no others; before the thirst for gold, and the herding with its worshippers, had brought sophistication and littleness, and the taint of mean and ungenerous prejudices,—no such thought as was now in Marian's mind would have arisen there, no such motive have been attributed to

ıer lover. But as it was, there must be something, she reasoned, ıeside more obvious and selfish incentives, something in the ıature of a powerful stimulus, to have perverted Gifford to false-ıood, and worked in him so great a change.

She went quietly home, showing no mark of distrust, no sign ıf disquietude, but playing her part on board the yacht with ıven and gracious propriety to the last, and prepared to take a ıtep which should be irrevocable.

She wrote Hugh a very long letter, taking for its preparation ıot one day, nor two, nor three. It was a week, in truth, be-ore she had finished it to her mind; and it was covered over ınd over with those traces which time makes invisible to mortal ıyes, but whereof the angels keep a translation to be forever ıenderly and compassionately remembered. What a love was ıers! So catholic, so deep; it was more than that of a maiden ›r her lover, for it had something of the holier love of a mother ›r her child; a love which survives the burning ardor of youth; ı love which dies not under unkindness, neglect, or even deceit; ı love as much greater and nobler than common love as it is ıobler and greater to love the stained and erring than it is to ove the spotless and innocent; a love which transcends human ove of the ordinary type so strangely, that it may have first ıuggested to men's minds the character of the divine. Rarely ło we see or know of such love on earth, still more rarely are ve its objects; but when we are, we are supremely fortunate, as Hugh Gifford was, in its enjoyment; and generally supremely ›lind, as he appeared to be, in appreciating what we enjoy.

The adventure of the yacht was of course a nine days' won-ler. Equally of course, the public voice mated Edith Parapet vith Hugh Gifford in every direction. It was quite impossible, ncredible, absurd, that a man should go on in that way, run a ıreat hazard to perform an act of humanity, without being self-shly interested beforehand or paid in one particular manner ıfterwards. It would be contrary to all precedent—to all romance —to all public expectation—and, consequently, to all decency—hat the matter should have any other termination.

Perhaps the stories which thus met her on all sides may have ıad something to do in fortifying Marian's resolution. Perhaps he fact that she did not see anything of Hugh, or hear any-hing of his subsequent actions, may have had some effect. Per-ıaps an idea that there really was a species of poetical justice in ıis marrying Edith may have had weight. But whatever the ningling of motives, she faltered not in carrying out her design vhen she had once determined upon it.

Her letter released Hugh entirely from his engagement; b it carefully avoided allusion to the particular circumstance whi was the mainspring of her actions. She said that matters h changed very materially during the months that had passed sin their engagement was made. He had new companions, ne pursuits was reputed to have grown very wealthy; and it w her wish that he should have—whatever change may have take place—the opportunity to act as if he were bound by no ties o pledges whatever. They were both still very young, and nothin was more natural than that they should have mistaken the depth, the permanent character, of their feelings. Such was the substance of the first part of her missive.

But more followed of a grave and earnest nature, for Marian thought it her duty, as she had thought it of old, to do what she could to aid Hugh to become better and worthier. She pointed out—and this in a way disconnected with their personal relations—how the acquisition of wealth in so short a space, with so little labor on his part to attain it, had worked unfavorably upon his character. How it had weakened good resolutions, sapped his moral vigor, opened the door to petty temptation, subjected him to poisonous flatteries from all manner of vulgar and ignoble sycophants. How, instead of devoting himself to the noble tasks of regeneration and improvement—services of which his country was so palpably and vastly in need—he had merely gone floating on in a paltry tide fed by the principle of accepting wrongs because they exist—of winking at corruption instead of denouncing it—of folding the hands in indolent sleep when duty and the talents God had given demanded self-sacrifice and laborious exertion. Thus even in parting with Hugh, as she thought for ever, the keen agony of that parting only prompted Marian the more to do all that in her lay to make him a purer and better man.

It was a week before the letter was delivered. During this time no one had seen Hugh with whom Marian came in contact. After its lapse he disappeared altogether from society, and vanished from the eye of the world. Poor Hugh! His sorrows had come indeed not single spies, but literally in battalions. The day before Marian's letter reached him, the failure was announced, on a colossal scale, of the great house of Ingott and Gollop. Already the exposure and excitement of the adventure in the bay had forced him to take to his bed. The accumulation of ills brought on a raging fever; and involved as he was for a vast sum in the misfortune of the insolvents, he became utterly un-

able to direct his affairs, or even to endeavor to save anything from the wreck.

The sheriff's officers were in his house, while he lay above, either entirely unconscious, or with occasional waking fits of delirium. The great fortune, with all the accumulations which it had gathered, was scattered to the winds, and its whilome master, the pet of society, the caressed and admired candidate for political and social honors, was penniless and forsaken. The gold by which he had set so much store—the gold which was to be the ladder of his renown—the gold, in virtue of whose possession men had been almost ready to fall down and worship him—the gold so carefully hidden from Virginia, to build a wall between himself and Marian—the gold so swiftly gained had flown more swiftly still, and Hugh Gifford was once more a dreaming and houseless beggar.

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

History, it is said, repeats itself. However it may be with nations, most of us can vouch that that of individuals does so. Few but are reminded almost every day of their lives of something that has gone before. Sometimes the remembrance is so startling, that it is hard to escape the conviction that there exists a subtle but vital connection between the two sets of incidents. Such was my reflection one quiet evening in October, when I found myself on horseback winding down a series of low hills, which trend towards Long Island Sound, near the point of its contact with the beautiful valley of the Connecticut.

I seemed to be living over again the self-same evening which had found me three years before descending the hills into the valley of Armstrong's Bar. Now there were a great many strongly-marked points of difference between the two occasions. The former was in spring, this was in autumn. In one case, the air smelt strongly of the sea; in the other, I was many a league from blue water. That was in the extreme west of the continent, this in the extreme east. The first was the land of gold and license, the last the land of husbandry and rigor. Where, then, was the resemblance? In what lay the force of the association?

Truly, not in place, season, or, least of all, in coloring. Well I remember that vivid green, so like the tropical glare, which drenching, long-continued rains had clothed earth and trees withal about the Bar. The coloring around me now was such as is almost indescribable, except for such as have seen it; but those who have not may gain some idea by imagining that countless rainbows had fallen from the skies, and steeped the forests in all directions with glorious dyes, which lost their eva-

nescence, and became fixed in the process. It was the most lovely period of the American autumn; but with all its gorgeousness, there was a sobriety befitting the maturity of the year, far different from the callow and upstart youth of the Californian spring.

But we are too far on our journey to linger by the way to descant on its scenery. Let me eschew negatives and divergences, and say at once why the two occasions were so strangely alike—reminded me so irresistibly of each other.

It was a soft, breezeless evening then; I was riding slowly down those graduated slopes which suggest the neighborhood of some great water-course; my path was bordered and arched with foliage of the densest description, and suddenly, seated upon a log, I came upon two men.

The instant I saw them the past three years seemed altogether a dream. I was again in a Mexican saddle, weary with a four days' journey from Marysville, armed with revolver and bowie-knife, and with papers in my saddle-bags showing a legal title to fifteen leagues of territory, covering what was called Armstrong's Bar. I was again to be greeted, first surlily, then hospitably, and invited to a queer-looking cabin, far down in the valley, which boasted a cotton roof, and such strangely-jumbled inhabitants. I was again to hear the melodious contralto of the tall, dark girl, whom those inhabitants would call Mary Anne. Once more I should receive the uncouth but kindly attentions of the Armstrongs; listen to the brusque criticisms and encomiums of the rough Scotch doctor; gaze furtively at the sad and thoughtful face of the young New Englander, who sat so moodily alone in the corner. Once more I should be an amused witness of the conversations and opinions of the editor of the "Mountain Clarion"; once more marvel at the quaint follies, the mingling of scraps of wisdom and painful puerility which came from the witling Ike, with his shock of red hair, and his extravagant shreds and patches of finery; marvelling but for a brief space, however, as it soon became evident enough what was the secret of the poor fellow's vagaries; once more I should see the great log leap up and pull down the latch; once more hear his joyous bark and——

Yet no! The charm was broken—the illusion was dispelled—the absence of this one sound it was that made the difference between now and then! Not spring or autumn, east or west, changes in colors, time, or odors made the real difference! It was the absence of that deep, well-remembered bay of Lion! There sat Dick Railes and Ike upon the log as of yore; but the

dog, with his ringing bark, was gone, and in a moment my wandering imagination was at one with facts again, and the past was gone for ever!

I was merely going to see the Armstrongs, and some others, at the ancestral homestead near Old Saybrook, partly for friendship's sake, partly for business connected with Armstrong's Bar. They had acquired a title there, which, for a consideration, was to be extinguished, and my old employers were to establish their claim. This was all. Not because of a desire to avail of a factitious appearance of authenticity, but merely for truth's sake, I lead the reader here to receive his last impressions of those whose acquaintance he has made, and in whom, it may be trusted, his chief interest may be centred. After which, in accordance with a not-forgotten promise, the individuality of the writer is withdrawn, to traverse the course of his story no more.

Let us go through the dense, arching woods with our guides —who have been long expecting us—and find out what we can of our old friends and acquaintances.

Of all the many charming old places which grace the swelling line of the Sound, there is none more so to certain eyes than Old Saybrook. To eyes which love to rest upon old trees, old houses, old roads; to find in daily walks and drives the proof that its inhabitants regard their town, such as it is, as finished; to see evidences of that which is so rare in American towns—of repose; to such eyes Old Saybrook is charming indeed.

About a quarter of a mile from the village is the ancient Armstrong homestead. Two hundred solid acres had Seth repurchased which an Armstrong once had held, as far back as the time when the place got its name, from a Say and Sele. You can find the name, nearly obliterated by weather and time, on many an old tombstone in the churchyard hard by, and in village archives there is matter enough, if need be, to trace an ample genealogical record of the family.

The house was very large and very old. But, like many old things, there was substance enough in it to build half a dozen new ones; and the barns and other out-buildings corresponded with the house. When the Armstrongs came back rich from California, and bought the place back into the family again, the buildings certainly looked rather shabby and unpromising; and pretty Kitty, when she first saw the house, bit her lip with vexation. True, she was to be Mrs. Railes at midsummer; but, as is the fashion with some American families, they were all to live under one roof. Seth could not bear, after what they had passed through

together, to have the household separated, and Dick was nothing loth to fall in with the old man's wish. They came to New York in May, and, as the purchase had been negotiated through an agent some time before, they moved into their new-old possession soon after. But it was a house which none of the villagers who knew it best could have recognized by October. What with a verandah running round the whole building, and all manner of rustic porches and entrances, flanked by rustic seats; what with fresh paint—which Luke, who had actually been reading John Ruskin among other recondite authors, happily prevented from being of an implacable, staring white—and a world of clambering vines, the Armstrong mansion became a very tasteful-looking as well as comfortable abode.

It was a dear old home! With rolling meadows and changing woods to be seen from its windows for many a mile; with the silvery Connecticut widening away to the northward, and on the south the great ocean-like Sound glittering with a scarcely less "innumerable smile."

No wonder Doctor Landale fell in love with the place, and bought what he styled a ram-shackle, tumble-down old house in the village. He was laughed at a good deal by those who knew how he was wont to growl at America, her boasting and swaggering, and her universal suffrage. But at first he said he bought only as an investment. The spot was near New York, which must become a prodigiously huge city, and all watering-places in its vicinity would then be valuable. Afterwards he averred, that although he had by no means given up his idea of a cottage on the Clyde, yet the air of Connecticut agreed with him, and he would stay a year or two to settle his constitution. Finally, he declared—this was more recently—that he found he could do good in America, and that the people were more disposed than formerly to be done good to; so that, in short, he would stay among them a little longer.

Habit, indeed, does much, and the doctor is not the only one who has learned by experience, which is better than books, that men are neither so culpable nor so meritorious as most of the world would have them, for qualities which spring from circumstances which they had no share in arranging, and wherein other men would be much the same as themselves. But the doctor really did good in his way, and to no one did he do more good than to poor Hugh Gifford.

It so happened that the party arrived in New York just at the season of our hero's misfortunes. There was no need of consultation among themselves after the doctors agreed that he might

be safely removed, and Hugh was taken by railway, passive and half-conscious as he was, and comfortably bestowed among kind friends in the old farm-house. His fortune was utterly swept away. If it had not been, we may mention, *entre nous*, that Ingott and Gollop would have been quite unable to go into that great street-cleaning contract which they secured about nine months afterwards.

But fortune mattered little in his present condition; for he was attacked by an illness so violent and so prostrating, that for many weeks life just trembled in the balance. The sweet, wholesome country air, unremitting watchfulness, youth, and latterly a ray of hope, perhaps, brought him ultimately through. But all summer long, Hugh lay on a couch where he suffered first long-continued delirium, and afterwards more protracted and racking pain.

He did not suffer for want of gentle attendants of both sexes. Of others, more hereafter; but there was one whose care and tenderness were rather like those of a woman than a man; who could never watch enough, do enough to minister to his comfort, to increase the chances of his recovery. Through all the long wearying nights, when Hugh's state was most critical, Luke Armstrong was by his side; and when, little by little, mind and body began to regain their tone, who but Luke cheered him, nursed him, read to him—when books were forbidden, save a second hand, went long journeys to fetch him fruit, or other delicacies, whichthe system, jaded by fierce attacks of fever, craved in the course of its slow rcaetion.

Certainly no woman could have been more watchful or delicate in offices which belong to woman's own vocation. Perhaps Luke felt himself in the position of a legate or deputy, and his conscientiousness was on the alert to omit nothing his principal would have wished done.

"I am giving you sad trouble," said Hugh, faintly, one balmy evening in August. Luke had pushed back the white curtains of a window opposite the sofa where the invalid lay, and there came wandering into the room all manner of delicate scents of jessamine and honeysuckle. "Trouble to all, but most to you, Luke."

"Trouble, Mr. Gifford. Trouble, to take care of you. What a word!"

"Call me Hugh; I call you Luke."

"Well, Hugh, then; although it never seems quite natural, like."

"Why?"

"Why, you know, you are educated—a gentleman, and we are only poor farmers. It is not natural, even in a republic, for us to be exactly like equals."

The room opened into another beyond, and through the door Hugh's eye rested upon many well-filled book-shelves. It was Luke's library; and a very good library too. More of history and science than of the classics perhaps; yet still a very good library. Then Hugh's eye wandered back to the owner's face. It was much more thoughtful than formerly. The brow seemed positively to have risen in these three years. But all the old kindliness was there. The head had not gained at the expense of the heart. The love which had been so sweet, which had been so bitterly disappointed, had exalted and ennobled a nature which was of that rare type that defeated love, or vanity if we will, cannot force to grow downwards or to become distorted. Luke was surely a gentleman, if any of earth's delvers could ever be such, and so thought Gifford as he gazed.

"You have studied, read a great deal in these years, Luke. I've no right to claim superiority as to book learning. And as to money, you are independent now, whilst I—I am very, very poor."

"So far as the money goes," said Luke, "nearly every dollar we have came from Lionsdale. But for you we should never have had it. So we're even there. Often since you have been sick has father said—not that any of us needed to be reminded of it—that part of the money by good rights was yours, and we ought, when you got well, to pay it to you."

"That's nonsense—absurd. I wouldn't listen to it—not for a moment. If any one has a right of discovery, it is poor Ike. Strange," added Hugh, feebly. "I've had such queer fancies since I've been ill. I thought—or did I dream it?—that Ike was no longer weak-minded—no longer silly; that he had marvellously recovered, and grown quite sane."

"There *has* been a great change in him, and there's no dream in that," replied Luke; "but I'll tell you all about it when you're stronger. The doctor—and he's more cranky and despotic than ever, as you can see—says you're not to talk about exciting things; you're to be kept quiet, and soothed."

"At all events," said Gifford with a smile, "there's no reason why you shouldn't call me Hugh."

"I will, since you wish it. But—as we have spoken of such things—there's a difference between us, besides those of reading and dollars, after all."

"A difference?"

"Yes, there *is* a difference in man that democracy ignores, but which, I take it, all philosophers have to take into account. It wouldn't do in America, I suppose, to call it 'blood;' but there's a difference, call it what you will."

"If there is," said Hugh, bitterly, "it's a pity it has not made me a better man. Why, Luke, you are a hundredfold worthier and better than I am!"

"Hush! You musn't say so."

"But I will—because it's true. Would you have misused advantages as I have? Having fortune, some talent, health, and more than all, the love of the purest, loveliest being that eve breathed; would you, possessing these, have cast them all fro you like toys, merely through the indulgence of a contemptibl indolence—a miserable vanity! Would you have sacrificed, a I have, fortune, honorable ambition, a holy love, for mere sel ish egotism? That love, more priceless than all else beside would you have cast it from you, outraged and humiliated Would you——"

"Stop!" interrupted Luke, and a feminine blush rose over h sunburnt face into the paler forehead. "Stop, Hugh! don't s you have ill-treated——Marian?"

The name came with difficulty from his lips, and when passed them it was with a lingering softness, as if he feare when he let it go forth, that something might happen even t the name.

Hugh looked confused. His head was weak yet, and he h*ad* scarcely thought, in saying what he did, whether his compani*on* had any knowledge of the events of the past year or not.

"Why, didn't you know, Luke, that we—were——"

"Engaged? Yes. The doctor read his letter to us—most of it. That was in it. I—I was glad of it. I knew—you remember what I told you?—that it would make her happy. And I could not doubt she would make you so."

"Who could? Heaven forgive me; who could? But it is all over now."

"Do you mean to say——"

"That our engagement is over—broken off—yes."

Luke said nothing for some time, but sat looking straight out of the window at the blue sky. Had he no inkling of this? Perhaps; but no certainty. Presently he spoke:

"And you treated her badly, then?"

"Very, as I now think. I didn't think so at the time. I was bewildered—dazzled—like one in a dream. But surely," h

said, suddenly, "surely you must have heard something of this?"

Luke's face reddened again. "I don't think this talk is quite good for you," he said; "but when you ask me that, I don't like to keep back the truth. While you've been sick you've gone on much in this way—in self-reproach, like—declaring you had ill-used *her*, and destroyed your own happiness. But I thought it was the fever, and Doctor Landale said people often went on and talked in contraries about their affairs in delirium, something as drunken folks abuse those they love best. So I took no notice, or as little as I could; but I never dreamed it possible that you could have treated *her* badly!"

"None but a villain—a cold-hearted, selfish villain—could have done so. Don't mistake; I committed no direct—no flagrant outrage. To have done so would have been less cruel if more unmanly. I persuaded her to tie herself to me, and then neglected her; placed her in the humiliating position of being regarded by the world as slighted for another—for another, brilliant in the eye of fashion, and rich in the world's homage; left her to believe herself supplanted—likely to be altogether abandoned by a paltry trifler to whom she had given her love, but who was not worthy even to kiss the hem of her garment."

"But you loved her—always—still?"

"As I do now; as I love my own soul! Sometimes I think better, since my senses have returned, and I feel the whole extent, the supreme wretchedness of my loss. Alas! I have not even the consolation of thinking it undeserved. Ah, Luke! what I said is true; you are—and were—worthier a hundredfold than I, a hundredfold better worth the priceless treasure of such a woman's love!"

"No more of this," said Luke, hurriedly; "you've talked already more, far more than is good for you. Try and sleep for a while; the doctor said you were to fall asleep before sundown. I'll come and read to you by-and-by, as usual."

"Thank you, Luke; you are too good—too kind—far more so than I deserve." His voice was weak and hoarse; he had indeed talked over much, and with undue excitement. A crimson spot was in the middle of each cheek, and the eye which had been so dull was in a brilliant flame.

Luke darkened the room, gravely wet a handkerchief with some cool essence, adjusted the sick man's pillows, and went softly away.

Not far from the house was a grove of stately young pines,—

a cool, shady retreat, with the smooth, dry, brown carpet those trees are wont to spread, covering the earth at their feet. Here Luke had set up a sort of altar; a rustic bench only, just like what he had made for Marian on the shore of the lake, near Armstrong's Bar. He took a strange pleasure in making divers little nooks and crannies about the homestead look like the former home in California. He liked to reproduce the same little conveniences; to erect them where they would afford as nearly as possible the same views; to plant flowers that would diffuse the same odors with those at the Bar. That there was a tinge of melancholy in this did not make him the less enjoy it; nor was it exclusively the memory of a cherished love which prompted his action. The innate refinement of his nature had received from the presence and handiwork of Marian its first strong impulse to growth and development; whatever, then, was associated with that auspicious period, either in sense or spirit, he strove to re-create around him. He came now to this rustic bench in the pine grove, and, casting himself at full length upon it, he looked up at the deepening blue of the skies, and thought. And the deepening blue gave place to a dusky gray, and that, after a while, to a deeper blue than before, and the stars came out one by one, and looked down inquiringly at him; and still Luke lay stretched upon the bench, staring up at the zenith, but buried all the time in profound meditation.

CHAPTER II.

"I didn't think," said Seth Armstrong, as he sat smoking his pipe in the piazza, and gazing forth on the fair expanse of rolling meadows before him, "I didn't think to own the old Armstrong Farm afore I died. When I went off West as a young man, I reckoned it made no great odds where folks lived or where they died, so long's grain was cheap and land plenty; and I kept on a thinkin' so for a good many year. But now, now I ketch myself wonderin' every day how people can find it in their hearts to leave the sile they was born and bred on; how they can bear the idee of laying down to rest anywheres except among their fathers."

"Humph!" grunted the doctor, who was playing apostate to his own long-cherished religion of a cottage on the Clyde.

When you were poor and had many mouths to feed, you went here nature was most generous to help you, and had no time) think of sentiment Now you're well off, with the larder ll, and the granary running over, and can amuse yourself by ecoming poetical."

"Fie, Doctor," cried Luke, "are not the poorest of your own ountrymen those who love their native land the best?"

"Truly it's said so," quoth the Doctor, who would have been rious had any one maintained the contrary; "but most in- sted on when they had only Hobson's choice. If they were e you Yankees, with a land of promise within reach—a Mis- sippi valley with no herring pond rolling between—there ight have been more migration and less romance."

"It's nateral, perhaps, to love the land where you're prospered ost," mused Seth, between his whiffs, "and yet see how our lks come back when they've got a little money, and often when ey hain't, even from sech a fine country as California. See w they come flutterin' back to nestle on these 'ere barren New ngland hills, like fledglings coming home to a mother!"

"Folks like what they've been used to," observed Mrs. Arm- rong, oracularly, "and if they cotton to outlandish ways for a ason it's only for love o' novelty, and they yearn for the home- ade crust when the gilt once wears off the furrin gingerbread. rmstrong's Bar was well enough, that is, as it got to be; but en there what a sight of things there was you couldn't have r all the gold, and flour at fifty, and bacon a dollar a pound!" nd the worthy woman peered fondly over her glasses at the terior of the parlor close at hand; an interior embarrassed ith such riches of china and patchwork that it must have re- ired affection the most profound, coupled with experience of e lengthiest, to cram all into the same apartment.

"Armstrong's Bar," pronounced a sad, measured voice from ast within the room, "is the pootiest place in the world. Vhilst water runs and grass grows we'll see no nicer place; and love it—love it better than any other spot I ever trod on esides."

The speaker was Ike. Ike, without any fantastic ornaments, a plain suit of blue homespun, his red hair combed straight ehind his ears, and the old look—the strange eerie mixture of ildness, feebleness, and cunning—replaced by an expression of eadfast sorrow. The voice, too, had no longer the querulous, lf-asserting ring it often gave out of yore; its tone was grave d even, not that of a person entirely rational, but far nearer) it than ever before.

"We're going to make the homestead as much like the Bar as we can, Ike," said Seth, "for we was all fond of it, and don't mean to forget bein' very happy, and—arter all is said and done—very lucky there. I'm not quite so spry as I was, but Luke, and you, and Dick can jest fix things up as ye like 'em best, and what suits you'll suit me."

He did look a trifle older. A little more grizzle in the hair; a little more stoop in the shoulders; a deepening of the hardy lines about the mouth, and the furrows athwart the brow; but the eye was as gentle as on the day when tears came into it at the hearing of Marian Rooke's sad story—her appeal for aid and protection—and the old accents of kindliness and considerateness, notwithstanding uncouth phrases and pronunciation, were mellowed and more genial, if anything, through the passage of time.

"The river's wider and deeper," said Kitty, softly, "than the stream at the Bar. We can't alter that. But there's many a walk and many a view around here that you couldn't tell apart from them we left behind. There's a little lake in the wood behind the Blackberry Pasture just like the one in the hills where—where poor Lion used to bathe—and Mary Anne and Mr. Gifford used to sit and watch him while he brought things out you threw in the water."

A low sigh came from Ike, which showed he was an attentive listener.

"And we've got the same kind of clambering vines set out," proceeded Luke, as if taking up in an understood manner a consolatory strain, "so that you might shut your eyes anywhere about the house, and not know whether you were in Connecticut or California."

"And the seats you've fixed in the grove," added Kitty, "and the views to be seen from them, are so like the old ones that I'm sure 'twould puzzle sharp eyes to tell the difference."

"Cappin' which," struck in Dick Railes as an irresistible climax in the way of resemblance, "the Doctor and me's goin' to run a line of levels with the th'odolite, to see if we can't fetch water from Buttermilk Creek to irrigate the south-east meadows, just for all the world as we flumed it over to wash gold out o' the Cañon."

"You see, Ike," added the Doctor, with, for him, an uncommon gentleness,—"you see, with money enough—and we've all got that now—we can change the Armstrong Farm into Armstrong's Bar almost as easily as build the flume. We'll have them as like as two peas in a little while."

"All except," said Ike, tremulously, "all except"—he hesitated, choked a little, and then went on hastily but steadily, This I know—though there's some bad ones everywhere—here's as kind hearts on the Farm as ever there was on the Bar." He rose as he ended, and, going down the steps of the piazza, wandered away in the twilight.

Every one turned, and looked inquiringly at the Doctor.

"Better," he said, briefly, "better every day. Indeed, the two seem to be getting well together—one in body, the other in mind. For that matter, Gifford had a very long mental siege, too."

"Not altogether," inquired Seth, "not entirely for the money's sake?"

"Tut, man, no. Only misers go mad about their gold, and the season is generally gone by with them for fevers such as breed in youthful veins. 'Twas a combination of causes—physical as well as mental—whose seeds were sown a long time back."

"It's strange," quoth Seth—"at least to a man who's been poor for the most of his days—that of all his fine friends, none have come or inquired for him in his sickness, his misfortune."

"Not strange at all," contradicted the Doctor, "if it were so—but it isn't. We left no country address when we moved him, and any letters were to go to my own agents. I've got several—three in the same handwriting—but it is not time yet to let him have them. His affairs have been settled, or are in the course of being settled, by the lawyers. These are not business letters, or they would have gone to them."

"Do you think anything will be saved," asked Seth, "after paying the claims against him?"

"I think they'll bring him in in debt," said the Doctor, coolly; "they generally do on the other side, and I take it Yankee lawyers are no honester. But what then? He's young, will soon be as strong as ever, the world is all before him; he can take heart of grace and try again."

"I dunno," doubted Seth, "naters is different. 'Twouldn't hurt my Luke now to be a poor man agin to-morrow. He never was bred to expect to be anything else, and 'twouldn't come hard on him. But it runs in my head it'll be different with Mr. Gifford."

"Like as if," elucidated Mrs. Armstrong, "folks had been used allers to the best things in chiny and patchwork, and would

feel wuss to give 'em up than them 'ere red Pawnees who never know'd what it was to want 'em."

"It's not the money part of the business," observed Luke, quietly, "which will discourage our friend. These letters, Doctor,—perhaps you know?"

"They're all in men's handwriting," said the Doctor, significantly, "and none that I can remember having seen before, excepting this,"—and he drew from his wallet a letter, which he held up in the dusky light for inspection. It was a large, thick, coarse-looking letter, addressed to Hugh Gifford, Esq., in a vulgar, scrawling, but very legible hand, and a huge "private" was pen-printed on the upper left-hand corner. The packet was passed from hand to hand, finally reaching Mrs. Armstrong's, who held it at arm's length and glanced at it over her spectacles for some time with quivering suspicion; but no one could guess at the name of the writer, and it came back to the Doctor undetected, so that there was a pause of expectancy when he replaced the missive in his wallet.

"Whatever my supposition," he added, blandly, noticing the curiosity he had excited, "it is the business of the recipient to mention it—if he chooses—and not mine."

"And whosoever it is," asserted Kitty, positively, "it's not the handwriting which will do Mr. Gifford's eyes—or his heart—good to see."

There was a suspicion in the family that something was wrong respecting the engagement of Gifford and Marian Rooke; but, partly from a feeling for Luke, and partly from a sentiment of delicacy rare in so untutored a circle, they had seldom touched upon the subject during Hugh's illness.

"I don't think it *ought* to hurt him," continued Seth, philosophically, "havin' sech a trial so early in life. I've seen enough o' the world to know that what's lightly got, lightly goes. A man isn't a real man till he's had to buckle down and fight fortun' into givin' him a fair show. The good there is in Hugh Gifford weren't goin' to be fetched out by luck, but by hard blows. And when he gits strong agin, if he don't see it in that light, he ain't the man I took him for. But, settin' that aside, it's my judgment that we're beholden to him for the sight o' gold we got at Lionsdale; and 'twould be no more'n fair to offer to share, leastways to offer to give him a fresh start in the world."

The Doctor shook his head. "Why, man, he'd no more take it than he'd take Mrs. Armstrong's china. No. He may be the better for his fall—that's as happens in the long run—but *he'll* take nobody's money as a staff to prop him up again; and,

what he'd helped others to get, is the very last on earth he'd accept."

"We were all in partnership on the Bar," urged Seth.

"That was ended by his departure. Still, the interest we have in the real estate may fairly be esteemed as partly his. If the adverse claim is substantially good in law, our title is valueless; but if there is any doubt about it, it will be worth while for the holders of the Mexican patent to buy us off, and worth our while to be bought. Such a transaction may yield a few thousands, and, as you say, give Master Hugh a fresh start in the world."

"But Luke thinks him so very much depressed, Doctor," said Kitty, "so hopeless and despairing like, though very gentle and grateful for what he says all of us have done for him."

"'Time and the hour run through the roughest day,'" quoted the Doctor. "We must wait and hope. When the body mends, the spirit may also."

"Ah, you can cure the one, but the other——"

"For the other, he needs another medicine."

Luke sighed, and strolled out to find Ike.

"What he needs," affirmed Kitty, "is what I fear none of us can find. Mercy knows we've tried hard enough."

"Which is——"

"What my poor boy could not get," said Mrs. Armstrong gently, but with a tinge of motherly regret; "I s'pose you mean Mary Anne?"

"To be sure. There's something wrong, and he won't come round not for money—not for a share in the estate—not for a new Lionsdale put clear into his lap—until that's made right."

"Ah, Kitty," said Dick Railes, lachrymously, "you kin feel for the sore heart, the hope deferred of another, but for one like mine that's a beating——"

"Go along, stupid! Where's the resemblance, I'd like to know?"

"Even for that necessity," said the Doctor, "I repeat, 'Wait and hope!'"

"There's a good deal in that," acquiesced Seth Armstrong, gravely. "Even Ike, afflicted as he was, at last found his remedy."

"At the cost," said Kitty, sorrowfully, "of the friend he loved best in all the world. Poor Lion!"

And they all repeated in mournful chorus, "Poor Lion!"

CHAPTER III.

It is a sad episode, that of poor Lion. But my story would be incomplete without it, and I would not leave the fate of even so humble a character in the action untold, or, by touching upon it in ambiguous phrase, clothe the subject in a mystery which might be more painful than silence. And after all, may we not hope—as some of us who have been so simple as to love dumb animals do hope—that the love and the kindliness which passed between us is not all lost even when the poor faithful creature is gone out of sight and buried forever; that the interchange of fidelity and protection has served a wholesome purpose, has sown a generous seed, to blossom and bear fruits of charity long after we as well as our dead pets may be out of sight—forgotten?

If so, even the memory of such episodes may not be without their uses. That which softens the heart and makes moist the eye, which inclines us to one gentle action that might have gone undone beside, which teaches a lesson of that catholic charity which includes not only all races of men, but even the brutes whom the Almighty has appointed to live among and be protected by us, may not be all in vain. I know that the life and the death of this dog have not been so. I know that both brought blessings. I know that there are those to whom the remembrance of them is tender and salutary; to whom it is as grateful and softening as the south wind which sweeps over poor Lion's grave.

They had brought him home through the tropics, and the unaccustomed heat which so often prostrates human beings was manifestly injurious to him. The clearness of his eye, the unceasing and watchful intelligence of his face, became alike blurred and confused. Once on board the steamer in the Pacific, he showed equivocal symptoms of disturbance, and some had proposed to throw him overboard, or otherwise to destroy him. But Ike, who had an instinct about the dog like a mother's for an infant, staid with him constantly by night and day, so that no opportunity presented for the deed; and on the Atlantic side, Luke managed to have the creature put in a cool, dark place, where he was undisturbed either by strangers or the fatal broiling sun, so that he was no worse when they arrived at New York.

But they arrived in the heat of midsummer, and although every possible care and pains were taken, his spirit did not revive, and his constitution seemed to have lost its elasticity. He was a powerful animal, truly, but he was no longer young; a dog of his breed at ten or twelve is, like a man past middle life, less able to grapple with a powerful disease than when in his prime. However they went speedily to the farm, the Armstrong family's old time possession, and it was hoped that in its green fields and unpolluted atmosphere Lion would recover.

They were comfortably settled on the farm by July, but the weather grew hotter and hotter, and the dog became more restless than he had ever been known to be before. He was savage to strangers too, in a fashion very different from his old sagacious way, when he would learn by the expression of a face, the inflection of a voice, whether hostility was proper, and whether he had to face friend or foe. Soon he took to wandering in the village hard by, and once or twice growled at the farmers' children, or otherwise unhappily made himself enemies; and presently there began to spread a fatal report that he was mad.

So complaint was made in a deprecative and neighborly way, and Seth said the creature should be safely confined. A kennel was placed in a quiet nook behind the barn, where both shelter and air were of the best, and to this abode Lion was banished until his health should give signs of amendment. But Ike had got hold of an impression—not an unreasonable one—that his favorite required free access to grass and water, and that, to effect his restoration, liberty was at least as important as anything else. The simpleton, with his usual cunning, made no open objection to the imprisonment, but he crept to the place at night and set the dog free, taking care to leave matters in such a position at the kennel as to favor the idea that Lion had enfranchised himself. On these occasions he would be found rambling about the premises on the following morning, and Luke or Dick Railes would tie him up again.

But on one unlucky night, or rather morning, for the incident appeared to have occurred in the small hours, a youth somewhat noted in the neighborhood for a rather predatory turn of mind, was cornered by Lion in the pear orchard near the house, and not only roughly treated in respect of his homespun trousers, but received one severe bite in the leg. The lad's mother was related to half the village, and raised a terrible hue and cry, so that the little place was quite in a ferment of commotion. The unlawful attempt which led to the misfortune was prudently lost sight of in the swelling proportions of Lion's crime. What indeed was a

whole wilderness of pears compared with the darling's maltreated calf?—what the sanctity of property contrasted with a be-lamed tendon Achillis?

The echo of this ominous commotion speedily reached the farm, and serious counsel was taken regarding the best plan of operations. While this was yet undetermined, a delegation arrived from the village, consisting of the blacksmith, the wounded adventurer's uncle, and the sexton, his maternal grandfather. These officials, with a respect due to the wealth and conceded standing of the Armstrong family, coolly demanded the life of the assassin who had mutilated the leg of their kinsman. It was a fact so firmly established as to be beyond all cavil or question that, whether the dog were mad now or not, if he subsequently became so, their kinsman would go mad likewise. In view of this possible catastrophe, no Christian could hesitate between the life of a brute, however honest, and that of a human being, however the reverse. This was the spirit, if not the letter, of their reasoning; and it was clear, notwithstanding the veil of a civil deference, that the deputation considered their statement rather in the light of a mandate supported by an overwhelming majority, than as a request, open to deliberation and optional refusal. In other words, they implied, prior to their departure, that, if the owner did not think fit to destroy the animal, it would be presumed that the task was voluntarily relegated to any patriot of the vicinity who might choose to undertake it. With this they departed.

The family were in sore perplexity. They knew no one at a distance to whose care the poor dog could be consigned; and even if they had, it were scarcely kindly or conscientious to call upon friends to assume the care and risk of a culprit whose fair fame had received so blackening a tinge, and for whose deeds, should he forget himself, they would become responsible in an imminent degree. There seemed no security in tying him up, since he always managed to get free; and if anybody had a suspicion as to how this had happened hitherto, he also had a conviction that a similar objection would remain hereafter.

While Seth, Luke, and Dick Railes debated, the question was settled in an apparently conclusive manner. The dog could nowhere be found. Of course, every one suspected Ike, but no one could get him to make the least admission, or offer the least explanation. Naturally, this gave rise to anxiety; for it seemed certain that whatever danger existed of Lion's destruction was not obviated by a temporary concealment, and all dreaded the effect which any sudden casualty of the sort might have upon Ike. The Doctor was still in New York; but he had always warned

the family that any violent excitement might be expected to produce a great and permanent effect on the simpleton's clouded mind, and all were naturally anxious to avert what might prove a grave calamity. When it was evident that straightforward questions were useless, then recourse was had to indirection.

"I s'pose ye know, lad," observed Seth, discreetly, "that the folks in the village feel as though they had a call to finish the poor critter if he comes in their way. 'Twould be an awful pity if he was to go onloosin' of hisself again, and meetin' praps a cruel and a lingerin' death; wouldn't it now?"

Ike said nothing, but he gripped the axe wherewith he was splitting wood with a tighter hold, and his furtive-looking eyes flashed with an unwonted fire; so the old man shook his head and went his way.

"I'd much rather not have an enemy in the neighborhood," said Luke, confidentially, "now that we are all settled so snug and comfortable on the old homestead; but I fear I couldn't forgive any man who did old Lion a mischief. I'd a great deal rather such a thing were put out of the question; wouldn't you, Ike?"

But Ike only set his teeth and went sullenly on with what he called his "chores." If he had possessed the wealth of Crœsus, he would have insisted on doing all the same what he was so habituated to, and have neglected it now and again when the humor seized him in the like reasonless way.

Then it was sweet, kind-hearted Kitty's turn. Kitty, always a great favorite with Ike, and growing more plump and, if possible, more comely as a young matron than she had been as a budding girl. "Poor dear old Lion," she breathed, softly, to Ike, as they stood in the dusk of the evening after the cows had been milked and supper-time had come, when Lion used invariably, wherever they might be, to present himself for his own. "Poor dear old Lion; I suppose he knows they want to hurt him, and so keeps out of harm's way. But oh, Ike, if he gets loose and goes about the village again at night and anything happened, what *should* we do?"

But Ike was silent still. Even the ingenious assumption of Lion's being confined for safe keeping, and of Ike's being privy to the fact, entirely failed to draw forth any admission. Not a word should pass his lips that would give any, the faintest, clue to friend or foe. Ike had heard that morning one word, one horrible word, spoken in connection with Lion, and it had glowed before his imagination in letters of blood, ever since. This awful word, *death*, never quitted his thoughts, and all the force

of his feeble brain was obstinately bent, as it always was when his affections were deeply involved, to prevent its infliction upon Lion.

After midnight Ike rose, as he had done long ago to guide Hugh Gifford to his ill-fated fortune, and made his way stealthily to the barn. Far away in a remote corner above the main-floor and even with the loft, where was stowed a great quantity of hay, he groped cautiously along until he came to a long-disused corn-bin, secured with a rusty padlock, and which he opened. In this bin lay Lion, patient and silent. Ike had had a long, earnest interview with him, while the deputation of his enemies were concluding their harangue in the morning, and the consequent understanding was no doubt comprehensive and complete. Lion knew what was expected of him in the way of noiselessness and caution, and he was not a dog wittingly to go behind his engagements.

Then Ike took a hatchet, a piece of stout chain, a tin pail, and a bag of broken meat he had secreted, and whispering the animal to follow, passed down to the ground floor of the barn, and so out into the open air. On they went over the bosky fields, which lay still and glooming in the summer's night, while the air was weighted with the sweets of new-mown hay, and the fragrance which falling dew distilled from harvest flowers.

They went a long way, and that back from the river, and so toward the inner country. Practised wanderer and explorer as he was, Ike was not at fault for a refuge, a sanctuary for his favorite. It was about two miles from the farm-house, where a range of rather abrupt hills finished a spur which cropped down from the rougher country northwards. Among these hills was one steeper, higher, and more difficult of access in every way than any other. Scarcely precipitous enough to deserve its current name of "Sugarloaf," it was yet so much more so than its fellows, as to defy agricultural invasion, and its ascent was seldom attempted by dwellers adjacent, to whom the only reward, in the shape of a very fine landscape, would have offered no attractions commensurate with the labor of earning it. No plough would ever disturb that hill-top, and few footsteps. Ike was a very good judge of the chances in a case like this. What he most disliked was the necessity for depriving Lion of his liberty, practically as well as ostensibly. The creature knew much, but hardly enough to refrain from following his master down again when he should offer to leave him solitary and alone on the desolate hill.

When with some difficulty and protracted toil they gained the

mmit, Ike set vigorously to work to erect a habitation for ion's future residence. There was plenty of loose stone, and good deal of practice at amateur house-building in California iabled the architect to work with no little skill and celerity. ı an hour he had made a cool, dark cell for the future recluse, ı arranged that he would in no case be visible from below, and ıuld always at pleasure avoid the glare of the sun. During iese preparations Lion watched his master with comprehensive igacity, and wagged his tail in acquiescence when the latter ould now and again inquire his wishes as to some matter of ınstruction.

The citadel being finished, it remained to provide the garrison ith provisions. Ike had brought meat in his bag sufficient to st for a couple of days; and he now went half way down the clivity to a spring, where he filled the pail he had fetched for is purpose. When all was done, Lion was chained to a staple riven into a tree close to the door of his mansion, the other end eing carefully secured by a double swivel to his collar. Ike ok great pains this time that the captive should not be able to lease himself, a fact of which the tender reproach in the latter's aggy face showed him to be well aware.

"You *must* stay put this time, Lion," said Ike, apologetically, or else them bloody-minded varmints 'll ketch ye, sure. eein' there's enough to eat and drink, a good roof over your ead, and a fine airy prospect, you might stay put if it *is* a ttle lonesome; let alone that, Ike 'll come back to-morrow, if e can; the next day whether or no."

So Lion mournfully acquiesced, and, with much compunction nd many marks of love, Ike made his way down Sugarloaf, nd home to the old farmhouse, just as the red ribbons were com- ıencing to flutter and widen in the eastern skies, and the cool lue at the zenith was beginning to fade.

For many days—some weeks in fact—nothing was heard or een of the missing one. Of course everybody at the house new that Ike was in the secret, whatever it was, otherwise he ould never take his friend's absence so quietly. They tried ross-examining again, but with the same ill success as before; nd then, experienced in the poor witling's obstinacy as they ere, they ceased to question, and the quiet life rolled on as efore.

Every night or two Ike would steal off to Sugarloaf, and ıpply the hermit with provisions and fresh water. But Lion ined under his tedious incarceration, and expressed a growing iscontent that it should be so long protracted. Might not the

memory of his crime have so far softened and dissipated, could again, with prudence, show himself in the comn Might not the fact of his lengthy exile fairly plead in c tion of the offence which had been its cause? Lion thou and, perhaps, he had a certain perception of the weaknes friend's understanding, which led him, unhappily, to a fa reliance when he came to choose between Ike's caution own inclinations.

Be that as it may, one solitary night in July, when th no moon, Luke, who had been at the neighboring t some business or another, happened to drive home ve As his horse trotted by the orchard—which ran over a s hillocks rising behind the great barn—he saw on the m tant slope, where the trees were sparsest, a suspicious figure.

It looked draggled and woebgone, and had that wist yet doubtful air which wretched beings wear who, right wrongfully, have been cast forth by society, and who evermore thereafter a resentful, yet shrinking consciousne they never again shall be welcomed in it. The figure w sive and gaunt, and it drew along with it a fragment of chain.

Luke first called gently to the outcast, but it only sh tail with one sorrowful wag and kept its attitude of dull ancy. Then Luke alighted, and clambering over a roug wall, made straight for the spot where it stood. But the creature had a conviction of his own wrongdoing matter of his escape, or mistook in the darkness one w always been kind to him for a stranger, he took alarm approach, and fled silently away. Luke tried pursuit, b found it useless and gave up the chase.

Next morning he resolved to put Ike on his guard, was clear Lion had found means to break from prison, largement must needs be fraught with grave peril to I But the breakfast-table was in a sad uproar. People ha from the village with accounts of a most calamitous ch Two sheep had been worried and one killed in the n large mastiff belonging to the butcher had been me thrashed, so that it was thought he must also be des several people who tried to come to the rescue had been s attacked, and although none were hurt, more than one w frightened, and all escaped only by the chance of bei their own doors. Finally, no one was safe while this ma

sperado was at large, and the village peremptorily demanded
s instant execution.
It appeared that poor Lion was fulfilling the usual destiny of
hmaels and Pariahs from time immemorial. What physiologi-
l causes connected with his long imprisonment may have pro-
ked him to wild and sudden lawlessness may be surmised, but,
the absence of means for hearing his defence, cannot be posi-
ely known. Luke and Dick Railes stoutly maintained their
belief that Lion was capable of such foul deeds as were thus
puted to him. Seth was dreadful sorry—dreadful—but really
didn't know where the poor critter was. Kitty cried and
)ked beseechingly at the deputation, as if to disarm their san-
inary intention; Mrs. Armstrong glared at them over her
ectacles, shook her head and her knitting-needles in boding
ison, and said nothing; while Ike religiously followed her
ample.
The sum of all was, that the culprit was ranging at large;
at none of the family knew or would tell of his whereabouts;
at if he had misbehaved in the manner described, they certainly
uld not expect the parties aggrieved to refrain from demand-
g expiation; and that, albeit they could not deliver up the
)g, they assuredly would pay for the sheep. With this under-
anding the villagers departed with mollified feelings towards
e family, but breathing vows of vengeance on the fugitive
iminal. The Fates were weaving away slowly but surely, and
ıe catastrophe was not far off.
But Ike, his mind in a whirl of blended fury and apprehension,
vore silently to avert it. He knew that the dog would not
rry in the open country, and that since he had escaped the
ngers of the night he was probably safe in his retreat for the
ıy. So Ike went calmly about his usual avocations, and waited
ntil darkness again covered the earth ere he sought the place
: concealment. At midnight he made his way thither, and, as
e expected, found the wanderer at home. When he found him,
ke's heart rather sank; for there were more physical evidences
ıan one scattered about of Lion's guilt; moreover, there were
vo especial circumstances which told against him very badly:
hen he ostensibly recognized his master he assumed an air of
ypocritical penitence, but when Ike first came up the height he
fected to be asleep. Poor Lion! Thou art not the first or
ıe last who has sought, by lying, to cover sins to which thou
ast driven by the unmerited persecutions of society.
After that night, Ike felt no less love for his old friend; he
'en felt more tenderly toward him since there mingled with the

sentiment an increased impulse of pity. Yet he had also an ill-defined emotion of dread and self-accusation; for he now knew that he was shielding a criminal. Alas! for the poor unfortunates, the cast-offs and tabooed ones of the world, when even the compassionate hearts which have sheltered, begin to waver as to whether justice has really braced their arm when it interposed the pitying shield.

Lion was now made fast in bonds intended to defy his utmost cunning. The chain was doubled, and a rope was added to supplement its restraints. The cry of vengeance was on the gale, and nothing should now be left to chance. When all was done, Ike delivered a long and touching expostulation on the impropriety of Lion's conduct and the risks to which it subjected him. But Lion did not listen with the same apparent interest and clearness of apprehension as before, and once or twice he turned his head sullenly away. Injustice was doing her work and his conscience was becoming seared.

Ike pondered long and anxiously about the best means of saving his favorite's life. There was no doubt but the danger was imminent. Some of the villagers had talked of poison and some of steel, but there were certain perils about the use of either which led them to be objected to. Gunpowder was free from such, so that it was generally agreed that the dog should be shot. Whenever he might again make his nocturnal way into the village, half-a-dozen guns would be ambushed for him, and by one of these it was resolved that Lion should fall.

Still, there seemed to be no safer place than Sugarloaf for the hunted beast to abide in. The danger of his being discovered there was small, but that of his again descending among his enemies was considerable. To insure against this, Ike took all possible precaution.

For several days a bitter feeling prevailed in the village. Some one had started the idea that the dog was intentionally hidden about the farm. Then there followed much prowling and spying around the premises, which did not quite please the Armstrongs, but which made Ike morose and savage. The fourth night after Lion's last escapade, his master, on attempting to leave the homestead to visit him, found that he was watched. Two men had been lurking in the adjacent fields with guns. They saw Ike emerge from the house, and they followed in his tracks. He had gone nearly a mile, when, by accident, he became conscious of the fact. One of the men in scaling a wall knocked a stone or two off its top. Ike did not look behind, but kept on for a hundred yards more, and then turned and led his pursuers

a wild dance for several miles through woods and meadows, and then retraced his way to the farm. Thus he gave up seeing Lion or taking him food for that night.

The following morning, he got hold of an old fowlingpiece of Dick's and carefully loaded it, putting buck shot in both barrels, and scrupulously cleaning and priming the nipples to insure that it did not miss fire. Was Lion to starve because his relentless foes were keeping him in virtual blockade? No; that very night he would make his way to Sugarloaf by hook or crook and take him supplies. The weather was stifling hot and the animal could do without food, perhaps with advantage, but not without water. Water he must have, at all hazards, and that night he should have it.

Alas! that night was too late. It was nearly evening, and the red sun was going down in a blaze of sultry glory. The cows were flocking lazily up to the farm-yard or standing in odorous complacency at the gates. The men had come in from toil, and were bathing their flushed and sunburnt faces in the cool water, for which poor Lion had yearned and yearned in vain. Mrs. Armstrong was blinking over her glasses at the setting sun, and Kitty was bustling after her handmaid, who was getting supper.

Suddenly there rose from the direction of the village a fearful, an appalling yell! and the boy, who threw down his milking-pail and dashed off to the nearest house, came scampering back, his face white with terror. A mad dog! A mad dog was in the village! It had been seen slinking down the old Saybrook pike towards the Armstrong Farm, and some boys had driven it toward the main street, where it had bitten a child, and was running about snapping furiously at all in its way. Presently two shots were heard in quick succession, and a neighbor ran in to say it was their dog Lion; he had gone mad, certainly; they had fired at but did not succeed in disabling him, and he had escaped into the woods on the south side of the burying-ground, with half the village in hot pursuit!

All this took scarcely a minute, and before the words were well out of the last messenger's mouth, Ike had dashed off to the barn, seized his gun from its place of hiding, and was running across the fields like a deer. Not far behind him came Luke and Dick Railes, and behind them again came the laborers of the farm.

The whole party, as well as Lion and his pursuers, were converging upon Sugarloaf Hill. Happily the dog had managed to get a long start of his enemies, and, although wounded, his legs were safe, and he pressed, as Ike expected, straight for his retreat. *He had* broken his collar and aimed for the farm, but

set upon as he had been, and driven obliquely in another direction, he could not now, without facing his assailants, carry out this design, while he could readily run toward the hill.

When Ike got there, the dog was in his lair. Breathless with the speed of his flight, which had been thus concluded by climbing the precipitous slope, Ike threw himself on the turf to recover. It was smeared and dabbled with blood! Poor Ike found his hands all covered with it, and—without looking for his friend, he burst out crying.

At which Lion came crawling forth—crawling with great difficulty, for he was sorely wounded, and well-nigh spent; but he crawled to where Ike lay, panting and sobbing like a stricken hart, and licked his hands, and then his face, with a comforting expression that was very pitiful. And Ike put his arms around Lion's neck and kissed his head again and again as if he had been a human being, while the dog, with all the feeble expression which was left to him, testified his love and joy.

It was the only living thing the poor simpleton had ever loved. Attached he had been to Gifford, but that was a secondary feeling, friendship or gratitude, engendered of the first. Was it foolish then, or absurd, this tenderness for a poor, dumb brute? I do not think so; nor would any one who could have gazed upon that scene and read aright the world of sympathy and affection, which darkened mind and brute instinct could thus interchange to console and bless each other.

The roar of bitter, threatening voices came nearer and nearer, and the sun's disk was on the horizon. They were coming straight to the quarry. Some one had seen Lion toiling up the steep, and the whole array of avengers were following in his track. On one side came the party of the village headed by the man whose child was said to have been bitten, and who carried a musket. Nearer and nearer they came, until at last, their heads, then their bodies, then their feet were level with the top of the hill. Lion crept closer to his master, and laid his head on Ike's lap.

"Move!" gasped the foremost man, thickly. "Move so's I shan't hurt ye!" and he presented his musket.

"Don't be rash, Anderson!" cried Luke, coming up close behind. "Let's hear, any way, what the poor brute's done!"

"Done!" roared the crowd in derision, "done, enough, I guess!" "He ain't no safe critter to have round!" "He bites folks!" "He kills sheep!" "'Taint right to the neighborhood to let him live!"

"Bitten my child!" retorted Anderson for his part, "who'll

die, like enough; anyhow, he will!" and again he threw the musket up to his shoulder.

"It's true, Mr. Armstrong," said a calm-looking man with a deep red face and white hair, "I see poor little Susy bit, and a bad bite it was too. She was playing in the road, and she hove a stick jest like this, and——"

"He'll die, any how," exclaimed Dick Railes, who had been hastily examining the dog's hurt with an utter disregard to the tale of his being rabid. "He's shot clean through the side, and two ribs are broken!"

"Then make an end on't! It's a mercy! Kill him off and have done!" shouted the crowd.

"I said I'd kill him, and I will!" cried Anderson fiercely.

"He was druv to it—druv to it!" murmured poor Ike, the tears falling fast on Lion's head; and, drawing him closer to his bosom, "You druv him to it, among ye—you shan't kill him for it!" The villagers were now closely huddled about the group, and their murmurs grew each moment more ominous and threatening.

"Consent, Ike," whispered Luke, kindly; "poor, dear old Lion is sadly hurt, and will thank us for being out of his misery—indeed he will!"

"Once for all," roared Anderson, noisily supported and urged on by the crowd, "stand aside, and let me fire!"

A gleam of resolution flew over Ike's face, and he dashed the back of his hand across his eyes. The parting rays of the sun gilded his forehead as he sprang to his feet and looked up to Heaven as if seeking there for the mercy denied by man.

"Me, then!" cried Ike hoarsely. "No one else shall touch him!" and, quick as light, he levelled his gun while Luke and Dick pressed back the others. Instantly the report of both barrels followed; the contents of both had passed through Lion's heart. The dog died without a cry. But Ike, without pausing to close the poor brute's forgiving eyes, threw the fatal gun far down the hill, and with a groan of anguish fell insensible across the body.

CHAPTER IV.

KITTY ARMSTRONG had lately become Kitty Railes; for after many postponements and excuses concerning the new house, the bridal trousseau, the absence of somebody she wanted for bridesmaid, the illness of somebody she wanted for a groomsman, and the like, the marriage ceremony was consummated at last in the old village church of Saybrook.

Things were managed very quietly for more reasons than one. It was not quite seemly, for example, when so old a friend—and a friend to whom, in spite of his distant ways, they were *all* sincerely attached—lay ill in the house of a malady which might yet prove mortal, to indulge over much merry-making. Then they had failed to see Marian; and not only failed to see, but even to hear from her. Luke, his father, and the Doctor had repaired to the agent's together, to make inquiries. Mr. Rivingstone had gone South, for how long they did not know, and to what particular quarter they were not informed; they presumed that Miss Rooke accompanied him; at all events, it was business connected with her affairs which had taken Mr. Rivingstone away; but it was quite impossible to tell when he, or she, or both might return. It was much the same account as that which Hugh received when he also returned from California; and the South was quite as large as Europe to hunt about in. So Kitty, after fretting and vowing she would not be married unless Marian came to help her, and after writing her some half-dozen long letters, which neither she nor any one else had the least idea how to direct, finally consented to a very plain wedding without her. For Dick's part, he had a great respect for Mr. Gifford, and truly hoped he'd get well and hearty again; but as for a groomsman, he'd as soon have the Doctor as anybody; or, failing him, the theodolite would no doubt have equally answered his purpose.

On the whole, then, the happy pair had a cheerful rather than a merry honeymoon. They went off to Boston during the first week; but Dick came back in high dudgeon, swearing he had seen more hypocritical faces, starchy airs, tippling of bad whiskey on the sly, and general under-hand and make-believe doings, than he allowed could be found from St. Paul's to the Rio

Grande. Hugh was not yet strong enough to talk or be talked to in a general way, else Dick would have perhaps found in him a sympathizing auditor.

Hugh lay on his couch and heard the old church bells peal out for Kitty's wedding. A little while, he thought, and the year of probation would have passed which was to have brought his union with Marian. It was strange she had never sent to inquire for him, since she must have heard of his illness. Surely it need not have compromised her in any way to send a kindly message, to ask whether he was like to live or die. And yet, he thought bitterly, it was the way of the world. He was in the position of Jacques' wounded deer, and even his lost love followed the example of the herd of "fat and greasy citizens" which swept on without even a look for "the poor and broken bankrupt there."

Hugh did Marian injustice; she had gone South with Mr. Rivingstone on the third day after sending her letter, and was entirely ignorant of what had befallen during the week which succeeded the adventure in the Bay. She supposed him as rich and as prosperous as ever, nor could she doubt, after what she had heard, that however her resolution, and the missive in which it was set forth, may have given him pain, Hugh would soon find consolation in the smiles of Edith Parapet.

Some people are very much swayed by what they deem the inevitable consequences of certain romantic juxtapositions or accidents in affairs of the heart. If a man stops a runaway steed, or saves a woman from a burning house, he must marry the rescued party by the same law which led gallant knights of old to espouse the damsels they preserved from remorseless tyrants. When Gifford leaped overboard and sustained Miss Parapet in the yeasty waves, amid which she was cast by the boom of the Ariadne, the Town cried out at once for a match, never mind whether well or ill assorted; never mind whether the lady were a Thompson or a Parapet; never mind whether the gentleman were plebeian or patrician. The eternal fitness of things demanded, in any event, that an exception should be made if need be, or even a miracle performed, rather than that a bold young man who had saved a fair young maiden's life should not earn the right to make it happy ever after.

Marian fell into this way of thinking more readily than if she had not been personally interested in the result. She could not bear to think of being a stumbling-block in the way of poetical justice. Perhaps this made her the more ready than she should have been to set Gifford free by bringing their engagement to a

close. At the same time, she did not forget that Hugh could, if he chose, refuse his consent to such an abrogation. If he chose, he might fly to her side; might explain away what seemed so equivocal in the speech of Edith Parapet; might renew his vows of constancy. But were he disposed to take such a course at all, he would take it at once. There was certainly nothing—ought to be nothing—to deliberate about. Either her imputations, and the deductions to which they pointed, were sound and substantially grounded, or they were not. In the latter case there was not a shadow of reason or excuse for delay. In the former, there was nothing better for Hugh to do than to receive her letter in silence.

Now when that letter arrived, he was too ill even to open it. There was, however an interval between the time of its coming and the access of delirium when he read it through. His physician had directed otherwise, but the letters had been laid on his dressing-table, he had recognized Marian's hand, ran hastily through the contents of her missive, and, all weak and unstrung as he was, he had sunk on the bed in a fainting fit. The same evening he tried to write a reply, failed, and at midnight was quite out of his head, and equally incapable of either writing or thinking at all. Marian waited for three miserable days, and then quietly signified to her guardian and friend, Mr. Rivingstone, her willingness to comply with a wish expressed by him some time before, to expedite the business which he was conducting in her behalf, by a visit to the South. But although Hugh felt pained by Marian's apparent indifference to his fate, he was too profoundly impressed by a sense of his own unworthiness, and by the conviction that he had given her bitter provocation, to question the justice of her behavior. It was his fault, he thought—as the merry bells pealed forth, and awakened so sad a response in his heart—his fault, and not Marian's, that they were not pealing for his own happy nuptials.

He found a melancholy pleasure in pouring his self-reproaches into the ear of Luke Armstrong. Perhaps he had some subtle feeling that it would afford Luke satisfaction to know how unworthy a rival Marian had preferred to himself. Perhaps he thought it a sort of atonement to Marian that he should humbly and unreservedly confess his short comings, and, with many a protestation of unalterable and devoted love, should acknowledge his unworthiness to be loved in return.

Luke listened gravely to all this, checking the speaker when he talked too much or became over-excited, and occasionally putting in a question or a suggestion, until he had become

thoroughly acquainted with all the details of Gifford's life since he had left Armstrong's Bar. It seemed to him so utterly incomprehensible, that a man blessed with the love of such a creature as Marian should neglect or undervalue it, that the whole discussion had something of the interest for him which would have attached to some curious psychological problem.

Finally, one day—he felt there was no indelicacy in the step with such a man and such a friend as Luke—Hugh gave him her last letter to read, together with his own attempted reply, a broken, incoherent fragment enough, which he found folded within the other, although he had not the faintest recollection of having placed it there. It was something like this:

"I am ill—ill, dearest Marian, and your letter falls on my brain like words of fire. You may be unable to believe that what was said surprised me . . . as well as yourself. Weak I have been . . . vain, foolish . . . but not such a mean, despicable wretch—not a liar, nor yet a hypocrite. Ah, my darling, the gold, the wretched gold, which stood between us like a mocking shadow, poisoning love, and forbidding happiness, is taken from me now! I am poor again, Marian . . . a mere, houseless, penniless adventurer, as I was when you first knew me. Don't hate me now. I am again become what I was when you first loved me. Don't turn from me now that there's no money to come between us. Do you think others will smile upon, pity or comfort a poor shattered bankrupt, only because *you cease* to do so? . . .

"I see you again on the prairie, Marian! . . with your glossy locks flying in the wind, with your flashing dark eyes all alight with the love of freedom. Fearless as Diana, beautiful as Venus, untrammelled, unchecked, all radiant with the joy of a new-gained liberty! . . Long before I knew you loved me . . . long before we heard together the war-whoop of the savage . . . before we saw together the accursed gleam of the gold . . . Oh, my own one, if we could find some spot where money, and what they call society, were not, we might yet . . . do not desert, but forgive . . . darling . . forgive . . . "

Then there were a few feeble, unintelligible scratches, and that was all. It was much the kind of incoherency that Hugh had uttered in his delirium. Luke read it over steadily twice, and then his eyes filled, and one drop fell upon the paper, adding another to several misty blurs which were there already. Some men, so circumstanced, in reading such a correspondence, would have felt anger—some self-pity—some a not unpleasing contempt.

What Luke felt, I will not say, but leave it to be judged by his actions.

Soon after the wedding, after he had seen the bride all blushing in a new white bonnet, a delicate blue watered-silk, and a snowy china-crape shawl; after he had seen the bridegroom, more shamefaced than Kitty, with a new shining beaver, continually dropped about the floor, and a glossy suit of black broad-cloth—Gifford, to the alarm and anxiety of all at the homestead, had a relapse.

Luke had gone to New York on some matter of business, so that the task of watching devolved chiefly upon his father and Ike. The doctor was with his patient during most of the day, but he had undertaken to attend to some others, to visit whom he must traverse long distances by country roads, so that at night he was obliged to get sleep. However, Seth was a conscientious watcher, and his helpmate the best of nurses, while, since his bereavement, Ike's affections seemed to have fastened themselves upon Hugh with more adhesiveness than ever. Thus although Luke was absent, as well as his sister and her husband, there was no danger of the invalid being neglected.

Hugh suffered from no want of care, medical or auxiliary, but he had been very much weakened by the previous violence of the disease. He was sadly emaciated, and when Doctor Landale found that the fever had really come back with much of its old fury, he, for the first time, felt grave apprehensions.

When Luke returned, after less than a week's absence, he was horrified to see the change. Again the struggle was renewed between the forces of youth and vigor and those of death and decay. For many a long summer night did Luke and Ike sit up anxiously watching the progress of the battle. For many a long summer day did the doctor glide in and out of the darkened room, taxing to the uttermost every resource of his skill to reinforce the vitality which was put to so fearfully exhausting a strain.

Hour after hour did Ike sit, solemnly studying the sick man's movements, ready to give him drink, to turn his pillows, or to summon help as the case might be. Ike's brain was clearer now than it had ever been before, but he found it hard, as he sat with his red hair brushed smoothly behind his ears, and his hands folded meekly before him, to understand why it was that a man who had craved for a thing so earnestly as Hugh Gifford had craved for gold, and who had had his aspirations so abundantly gratified, should have been made so prostrate and miserable, so abject and dying, even, as there was so great cause to

fear, as the only tangible fruit of his good fortune. Why, if Heaven had but seen fit to preserve the life of poor Lion, Ike thought, for his part, he would have been sufficiently happy!

And Luke sat and pondered too, after his fashion; pondered on the strangeness of the dispensation by which Providence had vouchsafed—not money, he cared little for that—but such advantages of reading and knowledge and wisdom, and to be crowned by the love of an angel, a very angel upon earth, such as Hugh Gifford had enjoyed, only to bring him to such a sad plight of suffering and hopelessness as this! Ah! if Marian could only have loved *him!* But it was a selfish thought, and Luke thrust it manfully from him. He had that to do with which the indulgence of such a thought was incompatible.

The crisis came at last, and youth and vigor once more won the victory. It was after the harvests were gathered, at the season when Hugh had played his little comedy with Virginia Chester, that the fever was once more expelled from his wearied frame, and the sufferer felt slowly but surely that reviving elasticity which braces the nerves and lightens the heart with the approach of convalescence. Life was spared; but he had been near enough to the Dark Valley to feel its damps—near enough never thenceforth to forget its sombre but salutary teachings.

CHAPTER V.

It was the fall of the leaf. The yellow corn was all ravished from the fields, which looked desolate and pitiful in their nakedness. The foliage, shredded from the trees, flew hither and thither, flecking the roads and hedges with patches of crimson, of purple, and of gold. The bleak winds, forerunning the approach of winter, came singing and moaning in from the ocean, and lingered about the gables and roof-points of the old homestead, and whispered among the denuded elms as if greeting so many old acquaintances there. And the glassy, placid Sound was angry and ruffled at last, bearing in ceaselessly, as it did, from the main "the sea's swift fringe of foaming lace."

The hush of repose which had so long brooded over the place while Gifford was passing through his wrestle with disease was blown away by the autumn gales, and the color came back to his

cheek while the rosy apples were tumbling from their branches, and the barns were puffing out with their harvests, and the sail in the offing bowed lower and lower to sharp gusts from the darkening east.

But what cared they at the homestead? Ample store had they in abundance, and more than enough for charity. For in that neighborhood, although the soil be sterile, and the seasons sometimes bitter, free schools are many and labor dear; so that beggary is pleasantly rare, and the low plea for food which, to unused ears, gives such a sound of shame, is almost unheard, save now and then from some chance old-world wanderer, who, by a cruel mistake, has set his face toward the rising, instead of toward the setting, sun.

What cared they at the homestead? Notwithstanding their independence, long custom had made a measure of toil rather sweet to them than otherwise, and, for all their money in bank and their hired laborers on the farm, they had fairly earned ease and jollity for the winter, by working with a will through the summer. And Hugh, whose state had been the cloud which dimmed the cheery sunlight of their recovered home, was nearly well now, so that apprehension for his sake was thought of no more.

And sounds of laughter were heard about the house. It was not a house to shake, as many are said to do, with such sounds. Although built in America, it was too solid for that—like some other things built there, which transatlantic prejudice would fain believe both fragile and ephemeral. You might laugh in it, shout in it, play blind-man's-buff in it, almost trot your horse up stairs without doing more damage than to set the venerable timbers creaking. It was built by strong arms, as their name betokened. It was not built for a long lease, as some English houses are said to be, which, at the expiration of ninety-nine years, will almost punctually rattle down of themselves, like so many castles of cards. There are some exceptions to received rules; there are such things as flimsy structures in the Old World, and such things as substantial structures in the New, and Armstrong homestead was one of them.

May be the savor of sturdiness about the old place did something toward making a strong man again of our hero. There is a sense of security which is reassuring in itself when the floors do not rattle and shiver under one's foot, and the whole household is not advertised when one crosses a room. And when Hugh first went down the firm staircase, flanked on the landings by certain images of dead-and-gone agriculturists, the like of which he had never seen before, and came into the low cozy parlor, where Mrs. Armstrong and Kitty had just been putting up

red curtains, and where a snug little fire was throwing ruddy rays on unheard-of treasures of china and patchwork, he certainly felt better for the solid character of all that he saw and felt around him.

It was evening, and the skies and fields looked rather sad as Hugh gazed at them through the small panes of the windows. But there was a gaiety within which made amends, for the family had assembled to give their guest a greeting on the occasion of his first descending among them since his illness; and they determined to give the gathering as far as possible the character of a merry-making. The Doctor was there, with his hard Scotch face wreathed in congratulatory smiles, and Kitty was laughing and showing her white teeth, and Mrs. Armstrong was beaming and quivering over her spectacles, as if there were no such cares as the possession of superabundant patchwork and china entailed in the world. And Seth stroked Hugh's delicate fingers in his great horny hand, as if it had been, what indeed it looked like, a woman's; while Dick Railes, promoted to his dignity of Benedict, regarded him with a half-superior, half-reverential affection, which could hardly have been exceeded if he had been a theodolite.

On Luke's face alone there was a trace of anxiety and thought, a look which betokened, if not distrust, solicitude as to something to come. Luke was weary perhaps. He had had much to do of late. A great deal of the head-work of the farm devolved on him; and as, when it was purchased, it was but imperfectly stocked and supplied, he had been often not only to large towns near at hand, but also to the metropolis, to make his purchases. Only that very morning he had come from New York, and his honest face showed signs, as has been said, of anxiety and, fatigue.

But he had been at home in time to give Hugh an arm down stairs; to see his easy-chair comfortably placed by the chimney corner; to help to raise the joyous shout of welcome when the invalid made his appearance in the parlor; and to rejoice with heartfelt satisfaction when he saw that the evidences of returning vigor were genuine, and not like to be, as they had been before, deceptive and transitory.

Presently Ike came in, and went up and shook hands with Hugh, with a smile very different from what used to come on his face long ago; and it looked as strange to the others as it did to Hugh, for it was the first that had been seen there since the day that Lion died.

The skies grew darker and darker as the sun went down, and

the rays from the little fire grew redder and redder. Tea was brought in, with a plenitude of those mysterious dishes which in New England are wedded to it; but as yet no candles. The company laughed, and chatted, and joked, and Kitty skipped through the folding-doors, and came back after a little while with a slice of her wedding-cake, which Mr. Gifford must eat, doctor or no doctor. There were as yet no candles, or it might have been seen that Kitty's cheeks were strangely flushed, and her blue eyes wet, as though something had happened to excite her by the way.

"It seems so curus," said Seth, through the twilight, "so curus, and yet so nateral, that we should all be brought together again. It looks as though it had been allowed we was to live together allers, and not to part at all. It looks as though, do what we might, we was to fetch together, in the long run, jest like the mercoory and the gold at the bottom of a pan."

"You being the gold, and I the quicksilver," said Hugh, with a faint smile.

"No," returned the old man, "exceptin' in one sense perhaps, that you've done a sight to clear us away from the dirt. I don't know much myself, not havin' been brought up among the eddicated; but I know that the schools and the teachin' air what'll make us great and free—and, please God, keep us so. And I know that our folks here—our Luke and our Kitty—both on 'em bless 'em—and even rough Dick, who used to be stubborn and sarsy—air all better and happier for bein' with you and the Doctor, and—and—Mary Anne."

He pronounced the last name with a sort of compunction—with an apologetic accent that might have been attributed to various motives. Hugh did not pause to try to select any particular one, but, like Kitty, he reddened invisibly in the darkness, and said:

"Heaven knows, good friend, I had more to learn from you than you from me. Steadiness, patience, content—in the place and with the gifts I had been blessed withal—all these was I sadly deficient in—all these might I have learned from you, who had them abundantly. But I was proud—proud, vain, and blind,—believing that I could teach, indeed, but not learn—and the result is well deserved."

"Stuff, man!" grunted the Doctor. "You're not more than half out of your tantrums yet. What have pride, vanity, and blindness to do with the failure of Ingott and Gollop? You've had a vein of ill-luck, that's all. If you had been Moses and

Solomon, rolled into one, you couldn't have kept a couple of rascally contractors from failing!"

"Or Pangburn from robbing our strong box," laughed Hugh. "Now it appears to me that the prudence and foresight we all lacked in that matter have been—although in a greater degree—my deficiencies to the end of the chapter. Bnt I doubt if my last betrayers ever seek to make them up as that extraordinary being, the first, has done."

When Hugh was well enough to be trusted with his letters, he had found among them some which excited very opposite emotions. Those of condolence were few; two from Clinton Parapet, who was most anxious to come to him, and who begged Hugh to command his purse, or anything that was his, without stint; and one from Eldon Clyde, offering, if nothing better presented, to get him a place on the staff of a very respectable newspaper at Albany. There was a communication from Mr. Doke, urging an assignment or some other provision for the payment of a large balance, which he affirmed he had paid to different ward politicians for keeping Gifford's name before their constituencies, and paying for unlimited whiskey on account of the same for caucus nights. But the letter which gave Hugh most surprise was from no other than the redoubtable Pangburn himself. It was dated from Palmyra, and from the context it would appear that the writer had prospered enormously. After a general expression of sorrow for Hugh's misfortunes, which he said "afflicted him the wuss as bein' them of an old pard," and after a remarkable passage wherein he contrasted Hugh's improvidence and folly with his own wit and sagacity, Mr. Pangburn added a mysterious calculation, which would have puzzled Cocker and Colburn together to understand. Toward the end appeared a statement of a sum which, after profound reflection, Hugh decided was intended to represent the prlncipal and interest of his share of what the writer had abstracted from Armstrong's Bar; and the letter concluded with an intimation that if he would like to have this sum *for a loan*, taking his own or an indefinite time for its payment, Mr. Pangburn would send a negotiable check there for, on receipt of advise to that effect. On the whole, it appeared that Zelotes was really desirous to do an act of justice and atonement, but in such a manner that he might avoid responsibility to other claimants; and he evinced his sincerity, when Hugh, after consideration, wrote him word that he *would* like to receive the sum in question, by sending the check by return of post.

"We're very lucky so far as that's concerned," said the Doc-

tor, "no doubt the rascal owns whole streets of stone-front blocks by this time, bringing him 12 per cent. with the greatest ease; and if we lose our little fortunes, he'll doubtless offer us all 'loans' in like manner!"

"I don't know that I'd mind much what he called it," observad Seth, sagely, "so long as he paid the money."

"That is to say," said the Doctor, "he may keep his character if he'll disgorge our dollars. I've known many small rascals, what you may call retailers of their consciences, selling small bits for small profits, but he was the most delicious, wholesale scoundrel I everstumbled upon."

"Ah," murmured Mrs. Armstrong plaintively, "he was such a good judge of patchwork and chiny!"

"I've often thought," continued Seth, "how won'erfully we all got our wishes jest as we sot round and wished for 'em three years ago. I recolleck the Doctor put it to me one Saturday night as we was all gathered together to know what, most of anything, I ambitioned."

"And your answer was a very modest one," laughed the Doctor, "at least your *first* answer; do you remember it?"

"A wood roof'd be slicker'n a cotton one, and a nice barn with stalls is a sight better'n a *corral*," quoted Dick Railes, with great accuracy.

"But arterwards," said Seth, "I made a larger mouth; rather I said if I was awful lucky I'd like to spend my old age on the Blueberry Hill Farm, at Old Saybrook, where my grandfather's bones is, my father havin' bad luck and bein' obleeged to sell when I was a little shaver. Them was my words. But I never tho't, I allow, that they'd come actooally true."

"You said something else, Uncle Seth," said Hugh, "which you don't repeat, but which was of more consequence than aught else. You said you were always content with what Providence saw fit to send, and that you were not going to begin to be a grumbler now. You said, too, with reference to our adventure on the Plains, that, aside from having a roof, we ought to be grateful for having heads safe and sound to put under it, and that, for one, you were willing to rest and be thankful."

"And I grumbled and found fault that you wouldn't tote six bureaus-full of linen fixings and chiny and patchwork across the plains," put in Mrs. Armstrong, penitently, "which wasn't very Christian-like o' me, let alone if ye had, I'd proberly never had 'em here at home safe and sound, nor yit had 'em at all!"

"As to Pangburn," proceeded Seth, continuing his reminis-

cences, "he wanted a stone-front block in Utica, and I spose he's got it."

"And Mr. Gifford wanted to be rich enough to go and travel in Europe," cried Kitty, "and he did it!"

"What was your wish, Dick?" asked the Doctor; "do you remember it?"

"I reckon: a good double-barr'l, a good dog, a good house, and a good horse, play-day half the time, and a—a pooty gal to help me enjoy it!" replied Dick, with more promptness perhaps than he would have exhibited by daylight.

"And Luke tho't if he could hev his time he'd like to get some books and read, and study for a year or two," said Seth, with pride, "and sure enough he has! So that we can see, as I said afore, how won'erfully all our wishes has come to us jest as we sot around and wished for 'em three year ago!"

"All except the Doctor's," cried Kitty, archly. "Don't you remember, Doctor—'A cottage on the Clyde, with many friends and few patients; with a pretty view, and enough to feel easy without being rich?'"

"I've got all but the first item, Miss Kitty," retorted the Doctor, "and can have that when I like; so my shortcoming needn't be set against the unanimity of our good luck."

"Shan't we say of our good Blessings, rather," said Seth, seriously, "for it seems to me when folks are made so happy as we air, when prosperity comes to 'em that their own good works never deserved, when each particular wish, even, comes true more than often it does in a fairy story; it seems to me that there's somethin' better'n luck about it, and that we ought to recognize and be grateful to a generous Providence."

"Right, Seth," quoth the Doctor; "we are over-apt to credit a blind and heathen idol for what we ought to give praise to an All-seeing and Beneficent Ruler."

"And Uncle Seth has a right to remind us of the omission," said Hugh, "since he thought of it, and recognized it when none of us did in his first aspiration,—the truest and wisest aspiration after all, the one that taught the best lesson philosophy has to teach, contentment and resignation."

A faint sigh came from the window where Luke stood watching the blackening shadows, and a moan of the wind answered from without as it thrilled through the lonesome branches of the elms. Kitty threw more fagots on the fire, and it blazed up and set half-a-dozen weird figures dancing on the opposite walls and ceiling.

"I'd no idee," said Seth Armstrong, softly, "that a man so

poor and ignorant as me could teach anything wuth knowing to folks well eddicated, and up to all that books could teach 'em. But I s'pose God has uses for all, even the humblest of us, and I'm sure it makes me very happy to think that even onknowingly I've been put to any."

"The humblest!" echoed Hugh Gifford; "even they or those who think themselves so, are evermore His chosen instruments. Even they, in His good time, are exalted, while the proud and vain are cast down. Surely we have an instance here which cannot be gainsaid. Of all our party that crossed the Plains, I was at once the least deserving and the most expecting. When your hopes were lowly, mine were presumptuously high. While you were content with little, happy with what Heaven saw fit to send, I was dissatisfied with much, and fretted for more than either my talent or my virtues made me worthy to receive, or fitted me usefully to employ. My aspirations were answered at last, but to what end? Behold the sequel! To you who asked for so little, abundance is given, in the full confidence of a faithful stewardship. Abundance was also bestowed upon me, and, alas! for what purpose? That I might show, beyond the cavil of even my own proud and exacting nature, how greatly I had overrated my own strength of mind, how unworthy I was of the trust to which I had aspired!"

"Not unworthy," murmured Luke, "but unfortunate."

"Unworthy. We may trifle with our own future—our own health, mental or physical—our own happiness, in a word, if we will, and be debited alone for misfortune or imprudence; but we have no right to trifle with those of others; and when we do so, our conduct is unworthy, and no gentler word may fairly describe it."

"And admitting the propriety of all this self-castigation," said the Doctor, cheerfully, "let us finish the picture. You have dealt literally with the shadows, let us now put in the lights. I'm nearly twice your age, and claim the privilege to use a free pencil. You have had a bit of experience which will serve you all your life. Whatever injustice you may have done to others, you are young enough, and ought to be good enough, to atone for. You have youth, talent, experience, as we have seen; soon will have health and strength; you have friends whom poverty won't alienate, even were there danger of it, which there isn't. In a word, you have all before you which a reasonable man ought to expect or hope for to make him happy."

"No, not all."

"Not all? Then you're not truly repentant, and you're as difficult to please as ever!"

"Truly," said Seth, warmly, "I think you ought now to be content."

"And so do I!" "And I!" "And I!" went in a strange invisible chorus round the little circle. Only one voice was silent, but it was not from dissent.

"Alas!" said Hugh, mournfully, "that opinion should be so unanimous against me. But I must resist it still."

"Tell us, then," pursued the Doctor, "tell us, oh! most exacting of men, what is needed to make you happy—to fill the measure of your joy?"

"One thing," answered Hugh, "to name which is to prove that I ask less—hope less than of yore. One thing—forgiveness!"

And a sweet, solemn voice repeated the word as Kitty gently opened the folding-doors and let in a flood of light—

"If it will make you happier, you have it, Hugh!"

Oh, moment of ecstasy! Oh, forgetfulness of all past tears, sickness, and misery! Oh, joy never felt before, even in the first consciousness of requited love!

Marian was in his arms—nestling there—closer, closer, never to be parted more.

And every face was alight with pleasure, and every tongue musical with congratulation, except Luke's. And Luke's face was hidden in the curtain of the window; and he could not, for his life, have made his tongue at that moment other than it was—speechless. But he lived a lifetime in those moments that Gifford and Marian stood locked in that intoxicating embrace—and when they looked around for him, he had glided noiselessly away, none knew whither. Had they sought, they would have found him lying under the stars on the bench he had built in the grove of pines—the bench which replaced the one he had made for Marian at Armstrong's Bar.

It was all owing to Luke. He had never ceased to strive until he opened communication with Marian, until he had finally seen her, and, in his own way and at his own time, told her all. He told her of Hugh's misfortunes, his illness, and of his repentance, of how he had continually talked of her in his delirium, charging himself with destroying her happiness as well as his own. Of how, when reason returned, he still talked in the same strain, in words which none could hear without believing that they flowed from a fervent and undying love. Finally, he

had given her Hugh's letter—the incoherent letter he had written but did not send—in reply to her own; and Luke saw in Marian's face, when she read the blurry scrawl, that she would not refuse what he besought her to do—to accompany him to the old homestead.

Not all men would have behaved thus. Luke acted as he did because he was Luke; and if there are any who think his action was vain or incredible, that it brought him no reward, or that people never do such things in this selfish world of ours, I have only to say that they have never known Luke Armstrong.

Marian and Hugh were married—of course. And they were happier, far happier than they would have been had the heyday of their wooing never been darkened by a cloud. The influence for good which Marian exerted upon all who came near her was the stronger with Hugh now that he had felt its need; now that a sharp but salutary experience had admonished him that he was not sufficient unto himself; that his character manifestly required, irrespective of the tender promptings of love, that aid in its proper development, which a strong, affectionate, truth-seeing and truth-loving woman, like Marian Rooke, is so well fitted to bestow.

And Hugh was not so proud now as to be unwilling to accept the little fortune which Marian was able to bring him. He had learned to know that to be behoven to those we love is not altogether a one-sided transaction; and that there are occasions in life when it is at least as graceful to receive as it is to give. Therefore he was not displeased when he heard that her father's faithful friend—and her own—had succeeded in recovering a considerable sum which had been bequeathed to her by will, but which the ingenuity of interested parties had enabled them hitherto to withhold. Hugh was comparatively poor, and Marian comparatively rich; and, on the whole, it was perhaps better, since discrepancy there must be, that it should lie in this direction.

Hugh resumed his old profession, and labored at it manfully, strenuously, and in good time profitably. No doubt it strikes him now and then, that to be a lawyer in a country town is not quite so splendid as to be a member of Congress for the ——th District, even with Salathiel Doke as chief fugleman. But he is pressing steadily onwards, and I should not be in the least surprised if he reached such a distinction at last, without the disadvantage or the expense of so questionable an ally.

Nobody will be surprised to hear that Clinton Parapet ran away with Flora Dimity. The blue-eyed fairy proved too much

for him after all, and the escutcheon of the family has a cotton cross, which it is to be feared the stately lady at its head will never either forget or forgive. When I heard of this shocking casualty, for the first time in my life I ceased to envy Mr. Parapet, senior. The calm, luxurious ease of his existence, with its wealth of books and pictures and statues, and freedom from public cares as from private straits, no longer seemed so delightful. The ladies kept up a dignified silence. Their expressions became more distant, more pervaded with hauteur, than ever. Their noses became more aquiline, and the curl of their chiselled lips more pronounced. They ceased to appear at balls of equivocal *ton*, and became more than ever inaccessible and exclusive. As a consequence, I hear that the reality of their existence has been more gravely questioned of late than ever; and that there are scores of people who stoutly contend that there are no such people as the Parapets at all. To which I have only humbly to oppose my personal veracity, and to trust that the evidence contained in these pages will be received with that dispassionate consideration which it certainly deserves.

The fact that Edith Parapet married a real baron, in Florence, two years after the events related in these pages, would have no great weight in America, since many people there disbelieve in the existence of such a place as Florence at all; and—notwithstanding he was a real *bona fide* baron, and not somebody's valet—I should probably be flatly contradicted if I stated the circumstance. Still, I am glad to be able to put it on record in this unanswerable fashion; for I have always had a kindly feeling for Edith, and like to think she has prospered in the world, and outlived her old love-cross, in spite of some little defects which are hereditary, and always will be so, in the Parapet family.

The last I heard of Messrs. Ingott and Gollop was, that they were trying to swindle the government in a stupendous gun-contract, and judging from all I know of their antecedents and consequents, there is very little doubt, indeed, but that they have been successful.

Virginia's husband failed in business—they all do in that line—and went out West, where he repeated the same thing *ad infinitum*. She has not improved much, poor girl, either in body or mind, from her marriage of convenience; who ever does? The game is not worth the candle, but the fact is only discovered when it is burnt out. Mr. Gaycow withdrew the money he put

in the mortgage on old Chester's property, on the plea that he must collect all his resources, before the time of his failure. John Chester, however, came forward and advanced the sum in his place; and he makes his father pay the interest every half year, and punctually to the day.

Of the remainder of our characters nothing of special moment remains to be told. Generally speaking they move on in their old grooves, nibbling or snapping, as Mr. Gollop would say, at their "baits," and striving each in his vocation to get the better of the world. Most of them can be found to-day at their old trades, and any one may identify them who chooses to take the trouble.

And Luke—dear, noble-hearted, self-sacrificing Luke!—is he to go on to the end of the chapter loveless, desolate, and alone? In one sense, I fear, he must. He has never wedded, for he was not one to wed without loving, and for love, all that he had to give in this world of such love, was poured out upon the altar of Marian. He loves indeed; he loves Marian's chubby children, who climb his knees, and would fight for them as he would for their mother! But—

No more! For words are all in vain to convey what those who have known men like Luke Armstrong will feel without them; and those who have not, have something of human nature yet to learn, which it is not mine to fitly teach. But Luke lives, and has lived a type of that best character in America —the staunch, well-to-do, well-read, and conscientious farmer; thoughtful, patriotic, and out-spoken. He is, and ever has been, ready to serve a neighbor on a small scale, or to serve his country on a great one; and happy indeed has it been for that country in this respect, and in her time of need, that, where she has had one man of the pattern of Doke, or Pangburn, or Gollop, she has had ten of the pattern of Luke Armstrong.

In the terrible storm which lately ravaged their native land, both Hugh and Luke did yeoman's service. I am not going to say upon which side they fought, for there have been good men, honestly persuaded they were in the right, who have fought on both; and I am not one of those who, when the battle is over, would strive to fan the expiring ashes of discord, even with the light words of romance. A holy conviction makes a holy cause; and the triumphs of brethren over brethren are best forgotten, except in so far as they teach a lesson, which is in its nature indelible, of the folly of fighting against the laws of truth, of liberty, of God! All else may well be forgotten, as Hugh and Luke now

it in the joy wherewith the Angel of Peace is welcomed ; the Demon of War is fading away into the grisly Past, and tions are looking in hope toward the bright promise of the e.

THE END.

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